ANIMAL DAY

PRESSURE TESTING THE MARTIAL ARTS

GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

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Important note

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

About the author

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Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine and self defence columnist for *Front*.

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Foreword

Fairbairn and Sykes

By Pete Robins

The underlying theme of this book on *pressure testing* that you are about to read is introducing and retaining a sense of reality in training. I have been asked to comment on this aspect of combatives from a historical viewpoint. Pressure testing is an aspect that has been readily overlooked, misunderstood or simply ignored by many of today's instructors in the martial arts. This is quite understandable as it is a subject that brings home the sheer horror of a real fight. A horror that most of us would prefer to avoid.

Only people who have stood up to a real fight understand that technique alone is not enough. Technique for its own sake, no matter how technical or *advanced* it is, no matter how pretty or pure it is, will not necessarily win the day. Many martial arts practitioners are led to believe by their instructors that physical effort is sufficient and pay little heed to the mental side of the equation. Often the instructor knows no better, but he should. Whenever he links in self-defence with his description of his system, he should be aware of all that self-defence, or rather self-protection, entails.

It is instructors like the author of this book, Geoff Thompson and his partner in the *British Combat Association*, Peter Consterdine, who should be listened to whenever the subject of self-protection rears its ugly head. These two men know what they are talking about, know what they are teaching and have carried out what

must rate as one of the most comprehensive studies in our time of the least understood and talked about factors of fighting.

They are following the footsteps of two remarkable men who have been through a similar learning curve some 70 years ago. This empirical study had been carried out half way across the world in China. To be precise, Shanghai, famed as being in all probability the toughest city in the world. It was in the international settlement of this cosmopolitan city that W.E. Fairbairn, a member of the Shanghai police (SMP) from 1907 and E.A. ('Bill') Sykes, a police special from 1926, began their work together that has been recognised as the foundation of what we today term *Close Quarter Battle* (CQB).

These two men could not just rely on the theories about what might or might not occur in lethal encounters, they were dealing with harsh realities. They and fellow officers had to go into the myriad streets and alleyways, houses and opium dens that were the hideouts of their deadly enemy, to pursue the Chinese gangs that were the scourge of all Shanghai, and face these ruthless killers. What they found and knew was this: to face up to and survive a real encounter demanded nothing less and nothing more than simple and effective techniques. Methods that had been tried and tested. Any spurious or fancy manoeuvre would most likely fail and get them and their fellow officers maimed or killed. They honed and simplified their methods so that they could be taught to all the men of the SMP, not just the gifted few. They had to use techniques that could be retained under conditions of extreme stress. One might say extreme fear.

In all the training that Fairbairn set for the SMP in his role of chief instructor in self-defence - arrest and restraint, shooting, disarming, house-raids, bodyguard work and riot control techniques, he strove for a sense of realism. His men were *pressure tested* in all they did.

To give an example of his thoughts in that direction I refer to the findings in connection with actual shooting affrays that he and his men were involved in.

We go on to say that beyond helping to teach care in the handling of firearms, target shooting is of no value whatever in learning the use of the pistol as a weapon of combat . . . in the great majority of shooting affrays that distance at which firing takes place is not more than four yards, very frequently it is considerably less . . . It may happen that you have been running to overtake him. If you have had reason to believe that shooting is likely, you will be keyed up to the highest pitch and will be grasping your pistol with almost convulsive force. If you have to fire, your instinct will be to do so as quickly as possible, and you will probably do it with a bent arm, possibly even from the level of the hip . . . It may be that a bullet whizzes past you and that you will experience the momentary stupefaction which is due to the shock of the explosion at very short range of the shot just fired by your opponent - a very different feeling, we can assure you, from that experienced when you are standing behind or alongside a pistol that is being fired. (*Shooting To Live*)

Our sole concern is the use of the pistol as a fighting weapon. We have nothing to do with such matters as shooting with much pomp, ceremony and deliberation at passive black spots . . . Probably considerably more than eighty-five per cent of actual pistol fighting takes place at close quarters, in a hurry. Close quarters means anything from one yard to ten - it is difficult to define it more exactly. Hurry means a hell of a hurry - there is no difficulty in that definition. ('Bill' Sykes)

What they both knew was that the existing methods of shooting would in no way prepare men for actual combat conditions. What was taught in those days was target shooting which had no bearing at all on a shoot-out with an armed foe. There was no emphasis on speed, movement, lighting problems and the all important element

- stress. Both knew the fear that hit a man at a time of grave danger, the surge of adrenalin that played havoc with the physical and mental system. Both knew that when danger *bursts through the door*, fancy technique and guesswork theories *fly out of the window*.

Fairbairn and Sykes understood that target shooting was to score points and was for recreation; combat shooting was for winning and for staying alive. The former cannot take the place of the latter. So they geared the training towards realism, to put as much pressure as was possible on the trainee.

This example may be seen to be well removed from the problem of a confrontation that anyone might encounter today or tomorrow, but the underlying message is the same. If you do not train or strive for some kind of realism and are never placed under pressure you will never quite be sure of how you will react.

Geoff Thompson is following in the footsteps of W.E. Fairbairn and 'Bill' Sykes and is to be lauded for that. He brings truth and common sense back into the gamut of 'self-defence' training, where nonsense and ignorance had reigned. Like Fairbairn and Sykes he has the courage and spirit of a warrior, but more importantly like Fairbairn and Sykes he has the compassion and control of a gentleman.

More than ever in the martial arts today, we must be seen as *sleeping tigers* and not as *rabid dogs*, bearing in mind that the sleeping tiger should not be of the paper type.

Read on, enjoy and like myself be amazed and educated by what this book contains.

Introduction

Firstly, thank you very much for taking the time to read this book, I hope that you find something within that will be of help in preparing you, your students and your art for an arena that is as savage as it is unrelenting.

As with all my books this is based on my own empirical study: with many hundreds of street fights under my belt I feel ideally positioned to help those that seek help (and apparently get on the tits of those that think they do not need help). I don't want to sound like a poser when I talk about *how many fights I've been involved in*, but if you've bought this book then I'm sure that you want to know where I'm coming from. I don't want you to think that I'm yet another *dry land swimmer* preaching about how it feels to get *wet*, neither do I want to sound patronising. I am extremely conscientious about my teaching and writing and will not write what I think people want to hear simply to sell a book, what I will write though is how it is. If my honesty offends please accept my apologies before we begin. I'm not here to offend anyone, that's not my game. I love all the arts and have studied most, but if you want to make them work for you a dose of self-honesty is an imperative; open your ears and take a hard look at the art you are learning, indeed teaching. Many people ask me to show them *truth* and then close their eyes to my demonstrations because it is not what they want to see, others ask me to tell them the *truth* and then close their ears to my words because, again, it is not what they want to hear.

Please do not be one of those people. Truth is often harder than a big bag of hard things, but honesty is the only way, so be honest with yourself, strip the bullshit from the art that you are studying

and ask yourself, *is this really going to work for me outside the chip-shop?* If the answer is negative or even vague start trying to find ways to *make* it work or change it for one that will work. Without any shadow of a doubt this book will help you in that quest.

It would seem that in delivering what I would classify as educational books and articles I have ruffled one or two feathers. It would also seem that some are *shocked*, no less, by what I have to say. They think that I'm a thug. To these people I would say: *Shocked?* Let me tell you my good and sensitive people that if you are so easily shocked within the pages of a text, methinks that you tigers must be of the paper variety. I dread to think how shocked you will be then when society's grotesque minority shatter your porcelain lives with their *shocking* tactics and leave you in a bloodied heap because you failed to heed the warnings and worse still failed to pass on the tidings to your students and loved ones.

Shock is not a word in a sentence; it's a broken glass in the eye. *Shock* is not a sentence in a paragraph, it's three fuck-ugly youths with a punch-up-penchant who take your baby out of its pram and say: 'Give me your purse or the kid goes in the canal'. Neither is shock a paragraph on a page, a page in a book or even a book in a collection. No! Shock is being so frightened by the bastards that threaten you that you can't sleep nights, it's the two a.m. voice on the phone that says: 'I'm going to kill your wife and your children', real shock is a face full of ignited petrol because you dared to tackle a burglar in your own home and finally, oh ye of the sensitive heart, shock is the judicial system that feeds the predator and starves the victim. So when we are talking about *shocking*, please, let's keep things in context.

Apologies if I seem a little overzealous but we are not living in an idyllic world where my base tactics would be unnecessary, we are living in a violent society where they often are. I have used all of the tactics that I endorse to protect myself and to protect others though I always without exception recommend *flight above fight*. If flight is negated we are left with a choice, be the hammer or the anvil. No one can make that choice for you but be warned that the consequences of coming second on the pavement arena can mean anything from a punch in the eye to a hole in the ground; which is your attacker's choice, not yours.

Many people feel, as a for instance, that biting is a gratuitous act and hey - don't let the kids see that whatever you do. Do me a favour: check out the Kata you teach your children in every training session, finger strikes that would crush the windpipe and kill, single finger strikes that would blind even with minimum force, ankle stamps that are so potent they were taught in the second world war as killing blows, head butts? Do you teach your kids that or wouldn't that be classed as *karate*? They're in your Kata too, Harry Cook was in Japan when Yahara sensie scored an ippon (full point) in the J.K.A. championships with a head butt that echoed all around the contest arena . . . I don't remember anyone calling him a thug. In Kata there are also leg breaks, back breaks, wrist breaks etc. Are we thugs because we practice Kata? In many of the ancient Kung-fu systems students practiced jaw exercises to aid biting technique: are these masters thugs? I think not.

Martial art by definition means designed for war. What is war? The greatest expression of violence known to man. In war we brutally kill our fellow human beings, we torture them, blow them apart, sometimes in hundreds, thousands, even millions, then we congratulate ourselves on a job well done. Well done and legalised

in the name of religion, politics, survival: put any name you like to it, no matter, someone will sanction it, especially if there is money involved. Now my friends, that's what I call shocking.

I am also told by the uninitiated that what I teach is 'not karate', and some of these people hold grades as high as fourth and fifth Dan. How did you all manage to get to such a high grade without knowing your bunkai? I teach boxing, wrestling, choking, butting, biting, stamping, awareness (zanshin), line-ups, distance control, deception etc and my learned friends say *that's not Karate*. Really? Have a close look at the system you're in and tell me that all those elements and more are not there. Of course they are there, they're just not taught on the curriculum.

To deal with a gratuitous enemy we need to employ gratuitous tactics, anything less and you'll be laughed off the planet . . . and then battered. If a finger in the eye is what is needed to stop an attacker or a bite or an incidental weapon, use it. It is a ridiculous concept to restrict yourself morally, or your students, by disallowing certain techniques against an enemy who will use everything and anything in his bid to damage. Only a fool would go to a gunfight with a feather duster.

First and foremost I teach humility and respect. I have a whole gamut of avoidance techniques that I employ before even thinking about a physical response, everything from avoidance to escape to loop-holing, verbal dissuasion, posturing – the list goes on. I believe that the vast majority of physical encounters can be avoided if you use awareness and leave you ego in the other suit. But if a situation becomes physical I do not limit myself or those I teach to socially palatable techniques, if I did that I wouldn't be able to teach them anything because all the techniques that really work are obese in their ugliness. Any kind of physical response is a lower echelon

choice, but if it is survival that we are talking about then this may be your only choice. And if you get into a fight for any other reason than survival then I'd say that you made the wrong choice.

There are so many great things that I want to do with my life, so many great things, and punching some brain-shy on the nose because he looked at my pint is not one of them. I never want to get into a fight ever again in this incarnation, but I am not naive enough to believe that it might not happen, and when it does I need to know that my technique and character will not crumble under the weight of a real fight. That's what Animal Day is all about, it'll prepare you the chip-shop-debacle.

The interesting thing is that when you learn to do it for the real, to the point that you have no doubts about your art or your character, you will find – like me –that you no longer want to do it, you'll have so much respect for your ability and skills that you will not want to use them on others unless your choice car is empty. Your new found skill will enable you to walk away with confidence.

Respectfully, try not to look for the things that I do wrong, if you do you will fail to see the things that I'm doing right.

Note:
As with all of my books there are inevitable interlinks, I may intentionally or inadvertently quote from my other books, often using whole chapters if a point needs illustrating. So if I do repeat myself and you've heard some of it before please bear with me. I have to class each book as if it were the only one you have read, just in case it is. For instance I cannot leave out the section on the inner opponent because it's in the *Fear* book - you may not have read the *Fear* book. Having said that I don't think it hurts to re-read the kind of information herein.

Chapter One

Why Pressure Test?

If you worked in a factory making manifolds for cars you wouldn't see a single manifold leave the factory gates without first being pressure tested, because the reliability of the car is determined by that manifold (or any other part). If the manifold does not stand up to the pressure test it does not leave the factory. We work in a factory called a dojo or gym, we give our students metaphoric manifolds called technique and character, then we send them out on to the violent streets without pressure testing either; then we wonder *what went wrong* when they collapse under the pressure of a real situation.

Would you ride a roller coaster that hadn't been safety tested? Would you travel in an aeroplane without a pressure tested engine or go down in a submarine that has not been *water-proofed*? No? Neither would I.

Training in the martial arts is a little like immersing a bicycle inner tube into a bowl of water, and then applying air pressure to find out where the leaks are. Rising bubbles indicate leakage, so we take the tube out of the water, get out the puncture kit and fix it.

The last thing you want as a martial art practitioner is to find that your technique or character crumbles in a confrontational situation. It could get you killed or certainly badly injured. The controlled environment is the place to find the leaks, not the live scenario.

By applying artificial pressure in a controlled environment one can find the bubbles and then fix the leaks without fear of being badly maimed or killed.

Therefore this book is all about exploring different ways in which we can supply that artificial pressure so that when confronted by an adverse situation in the street we will already know how well our technique and character will stand up to *pressure*.

The *live* scenario is about understanding the enemy and understanding the self (to steal a line from my late friend Sun Tzu). Understanding the enemy is knowing his game plan, his ritual of attack and his strengths, weaknesses, lair, the deception that he will employ as a precursor to attack, his mental and physical armour chinks, how he is likely to react to different stimuli like aggression, passivity, pain, fear, power etc, understanding that the enemy is unlikely to wear a stocking mask and hold a swag bag and cosh and demand 'give us your cash you beggar or I'll swipe you with me cosh'. Rather he will probably seem a rather ordinary person/s asking for the time or directions who suddenly transforms into an ugly attacking demon that shocks you so rigid that you are unable to activate a positive response.

We must also understand that a good street fighter will probably tell you that he does not want to fight before he takes you off the planet with a practiced right and a base fighter will probably drop into single syllables like 'Yeah!', 'And!', or 'So!' and go through a ritual of body language as a precursor to attack.

The art that many of us practice was designed to fight an antiquated enemy; the enemy of today is different. In fact the contemporary aggressor is very different from that of even a decade ago and of

two decades ago. We are dealing with a foe that is likely to change with each subsequent generation. Therefore we must adapt our art and tailor it to the present; anything else belongs in the antiques store. I could go on all day about the traits of the enemy but that would be out of the context of this book, so for more about understanding the enemy see my book *Dead or Alive*.

Understanding yourself is what this book is all about. How will you react when the shit hits the fan? Will your technique work for you when you're so scared that all you want is your mother? In fact have you ever felt like that. I have, and on many occasions, that's why I know the importance of developing a will that is able to over ride this strong emotion. Will it work when blood is gushing from your smashed teeth, broken nose, smashed knee cap, broken wrist, or when you're exhausted or nauseous, when you're outnumbered, outweighed or simply out of your depth? Will your character stand up to the threat of aftermath, *comebacks*, threatening phone calls, police involvement, and intimidation?

At the end of the day do you really want to wait until it happens to find out. Wouldn't you rather measure your own response to stress in a controlled environment so that you can learn to understand your own body and therefore fix up all the leaky bits so that you are better prepared?

Pressure testing may differ from one person to another. What I find demanding you may feel very comfortable with and vice-versa, often you may have a good understanding of what puts you under pressure, other times you will not know and will only find out when exposed to different kinds of stressful stimuli.

Adversity, must therefore be sought and confronted so as to highlight weakness in technique and/or character and then confronted again and again to gain familiarity and desensitisation. This is, of course, hands on stuff and cannot be confronted through the pages of a book or through the chalk of a demonstration blackboard.

Animal Day is a term that I coined many years ago and is, basically a universal way of pressure testing technique and character in the controlled environment, but let's not pretend, there will be elements missing that can only be found in a *live* scenario. What *Animal Day* will do though is get you as close as damn it.

Sugar Ray Leonard once said to my friend, European pro Boxing champ Jim McDonnell, that boxing at a high level is 90% mental. Coping with a real fight is exactly the same, the physical part is the easy bit, it is the mental part that really hurts. Coping with *think-fight*, *pre-fight* and *post-fight* is a lot harder than coping with *in-fight*. *In-fight* is very tangible, it can be dealt with, often instinctively, it will look after itself, if your training is good you will cope with *in-fight* well, if your training is unrealistic then you will fall.

What we will try to discover in this text is your own personal limitations and then help to expand your limitations. So consider this book as a home pressure test kit and puncture outfit.

Chapter Two

Understanding Yourself

Understanding yourself is a complex matter. Some go through a whole lifetime without discovering even the fundamentals. By stepping into adversity (whatever your adversity might be) you will find out in a hurry exactly who you are and what your limitations are. In Latin they call it *per ardua et astra*, which means 'through hardship to the stars'. The famous American Dog Brothers have a similar saying *higher consciousness through harder contact*. Don't be surprised when/if you find out that you are not quite the person you think you are when you look in the reality mirror. When I first looked, I have to say that initially I was a little disappointed, my limitations were greater than I had imagined in my mind's eye. Later I learned to take an altogether more philosophical view of my 'rising bubbles', rather than feeling disappointed I felt excited that I had located my stress fractures and was now able to mend them and make myself a stronger and more complete martial artist. The interesting thing was that once I had sealed my major leaks my confidence blossomed and I no longer felt the need to get into street fights just to prove my ability, in fact quite the opposite was true, with my new found confidence I developed the ability to walk away from confrontation, to let the other fellow off as it were. My own students and instructors feel the same way, pressure testing has made them very gentle people, and subsequently what they teach beyond Animal Day is the art of gentleness, the art of letting people off.

Most don't realise their own weaknesses until it is too late, they lie in bed (maybe a hospital bed), after handling a confrontational

situation badly, and think to themselves *what went wrong?* Understanding yourself means recognising your own personal weaknesses and strengths and also understanding that you can and will lose if you are not absolutely *on the ball*. It also means understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the system that you are practicing. Former and latter require honesty in bag-fulls.

One associate on a training course told me that he asked his martial arts master what he should do when a fight hit the floor (goes to ground work), his master said, 'We don't fight on the floor'. Draw your own conclusions.

To understand the self, one must understand the bodily reactions that we all feel in confrontational situations, firstly lets look at the basics of fear (for a greater insight see my book *Fear – the friend of exceptional people*).

Fear:

What is fear? How can one define it? The English dictionary informs us that fear is:

An unpleasant, often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger.

In layman's terms when the brain senses danger it triggers adrenalin, this being a human turbo charge, brought on by awareness/ anticipation to aid *fight or flight*. This unpleasant, often strong emotion causes terror immobilisation, or the freeze syndrome in the recipient. The key with adrenalin is, don't panic. Harness and utilise adrenalin, fine tune it into a laser beam of action that can be

turned on and off with pin-point accuracy, missiled into your response with devastating explosiveness.

Adrenalin is a little like *fuel injection* or *turbo drive* in a sports car; action, the metaphoric accelerator.

The car: by engaging the clutch, and pressing the accelerator you will utilise the *turbo*, and the car will move at speed. However, if you sit at the traffic lights pressing your foot on the accelerator with out engaging the clutch, there will be no movement and the engine will be flooded, all the fuel will be wasted.

The human: by engaging *action* (fight/flight) you will utilise the *turbo drive* of adrenalin, and trigger spontaneous response.

However, if *action* is not engaged and panic sets in, energy will be wasted and you will be flooded and overwhelmed by this natural energy force.

Body accelerators

Positive body accelerator
Your positive body accelerator is *action*. When you act (engage the clutch), i.e. confront your fear, adrenalin is utilised positively, adding vigour to your response.

Negative body accelerator
Your negative body accelerator is *panic*, this is caused when the reasoning process mistakes adrenalin for fear. More adrenalin is then released and one is flooded with fuel, this leaves the recipient drained of energy and often frozen in the face of ensuing danger.

If you find yourself in a confrontational situation and do not or cannot *act*, the adrenalin will be perpetuated by increasing panic. Like the car, you will be pressing the accelerator with out engaging the clutch. Nothing is gained and all is lost.

In the gap between confrontation and action, adrenalin can be controlled with deep breathing and knowledge, and the look of fear hidden with *the duck syndrome* .

Through my own search and experimentation I have learned that the explosion inside the stomach that so many people struggle with and that causes the infamous *freeze* syndrome, is adrenalin. In primeval days when mankind had to fight to live and eat, the feeling of fear was an every day occurrence that would have felt as natural and as common as eating or drinking. In today's society, which is very tame by comparison, adrenalin is no longer needed in our everyday lives, in fact some people go through a whole lifetime without ever experiencing it fully, so when a situation arises that causes the adrenalin to flow, and because we are so unfamiliar with it (unlike our pre-historic ancestors) we, naturally, neither welcome, use nor like it.

We panic.

Psychologists call it the *fight or flight* syndrome. In moments of danger/confrontation the body releases a hormonal messenger from the adrenals that hits and go through the bloodstream like a speeding train, preparing the body for *fight or flight*, deeming it stronger, faster and partially (sometimes completely) anaesthetized to pain.

• The more demanding the situation the bigger the build-up and adrenalin release.

• The bigger the release the better you perform (run, fight).

• But by the same count, the bigger the build-up and release, the harder it is to control.

Adrenalin is released in several ways: there is slow release, fast release, aftermath and *combo*. I will take them in turn.

Slow release (think-fight)
When you anticipate confrontation the body releases adrenalin slowly and often over a long period. The slow release is not so intense as the fast release but, due to its longevity, it can wear and corrode the recipient. Things like anticipation of having to talk in public, a big sales meeting, a forthcoming karate competition, a planned confrontation with the husband/wife/neighbour/boss etc. will cause slow release often up to months before the expected confrontation. Boxers often have to cope with think-fight for months before a fight.

Fast release (pre-fight fear)
Psychologists like to call this *adrenal dump*, the bodyguards list it as the *WOW* factor. The fast release occurs when anticipation is not present, or when a situation escalates unexpectedly fast, causing adrenal dump, this feeling is often so intense that the recipient freezes in the face of confrontation, the reasoning process mistaking it for sheer terror. This the most devastating of the three. Fast release occurs when a confrontation arises that one was not ready or prepared for, usually the same as those that cause slow release but without the prior notice. You are in a big meeting and

unexpectedly you are asked to address those present without any preparation or you are confronted, again without warning by your boss/neighbour/partner or an attacker etc.

In-fight release

Once a situation occurs the feeling of fear usually subsides, but if you struggle during the situation/fight and start to get the wrong end of a bad situation the body will, again, release adrenalin causing *freeze* or capitulation. The thought of losing, added to in-fight adrenalin, can cause terrible anxiety. It is a sign of strong character if you can override these feelings.

Aftermath

After confrontation, whether successful or not, the body often secretes slow releases of adrenalin, this being brought on possibly by the stress of *scenario overload*, when confrontation is so traumatic that is forces the body/mind into overload to cope leaving the recipient mentally and physically weak, and so vulnerable. It is also brought on by post confrontation anticipation, when the brain senses/dreads another confrontation or a repeat of the earlier confrontation it, again, releases adrenalin to prepare the body. Aftermath has been responsible for many sleepless nights.

Pre/post-fight trauma

From my experience many people bottle out before a fight due to pre/post-fight trauma. That is, worrying about the consequences of aftermath before the fight even begins. This is usually catalysed by the inner opponent who badgers you with the negative possibilities of your actions. This is especially so with a reputable fighter who has a name for *comebacks* (revenge attacks). Often you may know in your heart that you can beat the person but cannot handle the thought of aftermath, ie. come-backs, police

involvement, badly injuring your opponent or being badly injured yourself. Part of dealing with this is, as Sun Tzu says *counting the cost before engaging in battle*. You must look at all the possible consequences of your actions and accept responsibility for them before you engage in battle. You must tell yourself that *whatever happens, I'll handle it* (greater detail in the *Fear* book).

Adrenal Combo

Those working/living in a stress related environment, the stock exchange, business, security etc. may experience a combination (combo) of the latter. Slow release because they anticipate confrontation, adrenal dump when situations unexpectedly occur in their environment and aftermath, in relation to situations that have already happened. At once the recipient may experience a concoction of all four.

All of the pre-described feelings are as natural as the feelings of hunger and thirst, also they are all controllable. The important thing initially is accepting the fact that they are natural and that you are not different or a coward because you have these feelings. When there is confrontation of any kind there will be adrenalin, it will never go away, though you will learn to control and harness those feelings.

The duck syndrome

In many aspects of confrontation, certainly business and combat, it can be to the recipient's detriment to show that he is suffering the ills of fear, this often being seen as a weak link, so it is profitable to be able to hide the physical manifestations of adrenalin. Even in nature, a dog will attack when he senses fear, the same can be said in all walks of life.

A duck will appear to glide through the water with grace and elegance. Under the water his little webbed feet will be going like the clappers. When you understand and can control the adrenal flow it is possible to hide adrenal reaction ('going like the clappers') by appearing unmoved and calm. This deceives those around you into believing that you are not scared. As an old sage once said, 'When ignorance is mutual, confidence is king.' (For detail on how to use *adrenalin switches* to beat your opponent see *Dead or Alive*).

As I mentioned before, recognising the feeling of fear and understanding its mechanics will help to minimize its shock impetus.

These are the natural bodily reactions to adrenalin:

Pre fight shakes
Your legs, and possibly other limbs, may shake uncontrollably.

Dry mouth
Your mouth may become dry and pasty.

Voice quiver
Your voice may acquire a nervous and audible tremor.

Tunnel vision
On the positive side, tunnel vision enhances visual concentration. Its negative by-product is blinkering of peripheral vision.

Sweaty palms and forehead
The palms of the hands and forehead often sweat profusely.

Nausea
Adrenalin may cause vomiting, or the feeling of vomiting.

Bowel loosening
The recipient may experience constant urges to use the toilet.

'Yellow' fever
Adrenalin, certainly adrenal dump, evokes feelings of helplessness and abject terror. Fear of confrontation may bring on an extreme feeling of depression and foreboding. Tears may also occur.

Time distortion
Many reported that confrontation seemed to last an eternity, when in reality it may have only lasted a few minutes. During confrontation time can appear to stand still, one minute often feeling like one hour. Paradoxically, in retrospect, many have said, 'It all happened so fast'. When interviewing James, the victim of an unsolicited assault, he initially told me that he was attacked without warning. After talking to him at some length it turned out that, between first seeing his attackers and the attack itself, there was a time lapse of 11 seconds, this being lost to time distortion.

Restless nights
Many suffer from restless nights when experiencing slow release and aftermath.

Irritability
Constant exposure often makes the recipient irritable and bad tempered, this is often as much caused by lack of food and sleep as anything else.

No appetite
Appetite tends to lessen, often resulting in weight loss, especially with slow release and aftermath.

Poor sex drive
Appetite for sex can be seriously curbed.

Increased heart rate
Due to the turbo drive of adrenalin the heart rate often increases to what the recipient may feel is an abnormal rate, some may even experience chest pains as a result of tenseness in the pectoral region.

Depression
As a result of all the inner turmoil brought on by anticipation, depression often occurs.

These are not the only bodily reactions to adrenalin, though they are certainly the main ones. Other reactions may occur as a direct result of confrontation.

All of the forgoing feelings are usual, accept and ignore them, they are all part and parcel of adrenal reaction and, though unpleasant, quite natural. The feelings cannot hurt or harm you and they do lessen in intensity as you become more exposed to them.

Now let's have a look at some of the things that can force capitulation in a real fight, and often in the controlled arena also.

1) Aggression

Many people are psyched out in real situations by aggression, as soon as the attacker becomes aggressive they capitulate, this is also true in the controlled arena. The simple truth is *raw aggression scares people*. I have beaten many opponents in the street with aggression alone, this is because aggression registers *danger* with the subconscious mind, even when, in the controlled area, the conscious mind knows that there is no danger, the subconscious

still reacts to aggression by switching on adrenalin to aid response, the reasoning process mistakes adrenalin for fear and hey presto the recipient is scared.

2) Non-Aggression

Often when a situation is occurring the opponent or potential attacker may be completely non-aggressive, in theory this shouldn't scare us but in reality it often does because we equate non-aggression for non-fear. The sub-conscious mind believes, some times rightly, that the non-aggressive predator is emotionless and feels no fear, this unnerves the mind and again intimates danger causing adrenal flow. Non-aggression is usually a sign that the aggressor is over confident or very experienced in the duck syndrome.

2) Contact

Whether the contact be poking, grabbing, pulling or attacking, in or out of the controlled arena physical contact psyches people out and for the same reason as aggression, the subconscious mind anticipates danger and switches the adrenalin on, again causing the recipient to feel fear.

I have demonstrated this in the controlled arena, firstly telling a volunteer that no matter what I do or say he will be in no danger, then I pretend to get aggressive and poke him in the chest. I tell him that I am going to knock him out. Even though, on a conscious level he knows that he is in absolutely no danger his subconscious mind, working completely independently senses danger and activates *fight or flight*.

3) Eye Contact

Have you ever been in a pub or a restaurant and someone has stared at you menacingly across the room and you've instantly felt scared? I have. The visual stimuli of silent aggression sends the message to the brain that there might be danger, the brain activates adrenalin, the recipient feels fear.

Size

The physical size of an opponent often causes the brain to over exaggerate the situation believing that size is synonymous with strength/ability when of course it is not, never the less the brain activates adrenalin to help you out, just in case. Paradoxically you may be faced with an opponent who is small/light, the fact that he is there and ready to fight intimates to the sub-conscious mind that there is more danger than is outwardly apparent, after all if he is that small and still wants to fight me *he must be good*. This is especially so if the little opponent is very aggressive or overly cool.

Reputation

The brain often activates *adrenal dump* when faced with a reputable fighter, sensing extreme danger. This happens in the controlled arena and on the pavement arena. Adrenal dump is the hardest form of adrenalin to control because it comes so fast and without warning. The recipient feeling, mistakenly, immediate fear, this leaving the door wide open for the inner opponent who goes to work on the inner destruction that leaves you beaten even before raising a guard. It is very hard for the eyes to see what the mind has got completely out of focus. With a reputable fighter you will be thinking of everything at once and capitulation often occurs.

4) Tiredness

When the body gets tired during confrontation, the subconscious mind, realising that tiredness can lead to defeat, injects the recipient with the turbo drive of adrenalin in a bid to salvage a bad situation. Again the recipient panics, thinking it's fear, the panic uses up the adrenalin negatively and often causes capitulation.

Pain/Injury

Pain, caused by injury is the body's way of saying *stop*, any more may be detrimental. Our innate survival instincts, again on a subconscious level, are often set at a very low tolerance rate causing us to abort long before we reach our desired goals, these *cut-out* points have to be extended to allow greater tolerance, in some cases even erased completely. Pain is the biggest stopping point for most people. Also pain/injury will register with the brain as danger and activate adrenalin which will act as an anesthetic, whilst it does do this it also causes the fear syndrome. So where adrenalin should offer fight/flight/anesthesia to aid survival it causes *freeze* which often begets defeat.

Nausea

If you reach nausea it can mean one of several things; if you reach it very quickly it may be because you are unfit, if you are you will feel sick very quickly, or it may be a reaction to adrenalin (a by-product of adrenalin can be nausea). You may be fit but have still, due to an elongated battle, reached your physical limitations. This feeling can also cause adrenalin because the subconscious senses that there is a danger of defeat.

The Inner Opponent

At the base of all the aforementioned (and you may well add more to the list) is the inner opponent.

Animal Day

This from my book *Fear - the friend of exceptional people*:

The ugly hand maiden of fear is the omniscient Mr Negative, General Sun Tzu called him the inner opponent, Susan Jeffers, in her book *Feel the fear - and do it anyway*, called him the chatterbox, I call him Mr Negative. That negative voice that perches on the shoulder of your minds eyes and tells you that you're frightened, scared or that you *can't handle it* (the situation). Many people are not beaten by their fear, rather they are beaten by their own minds. A negative notion that latches on to a subconscious insecurity soon grows into a monstrously big *inner opponent* that forces people to acquiesce a lot sooner that they should. The inner opponent is responsible for beating more people that any tangible or intangible fear. It is fair to say that if you cannot beat the man on the inside then you cannot beat the man on the outside.

I remember a wonderful story about a wrestler who was travelling by train from Glasgow to London to wrestle the legendary Bert Asarati, renowned for *hurting* his opponents. All the way down on the train journey the wrestler fought with his inner opponent who kept on reminding him of the prowess of Mr Asarati. Every time the train stopped at a station the wrestler's inner opponent tempted him to get off and go back to Glasgow, at each station the inner opponent getting stronger and stronger, the wrestlers will getting weaker and weaker. By Birmingham the wrestler could stand no more. He got off the train and caught the next back to Glasgow. Mr Asarati received a note from the wrestler that said, 'Gone back to Glasgow, you beat me in Birmingham'. His inner opponent defeated him hours before he was due to enter the ring.

This story will be familiar to many, only the opponent may not have been an 18 stone wrestler, rather a big business deal, the

decision to change job/home/car/relationship, ask the boss for a rise, travel the world, start up a new business, expand an existing business. To the phobic it may have been leaving the house, going in a plane, travelling in a car, going in a lift, up an escalator etc. Many are beaten before the fight by their own minds. Why? Because it takes no effort to think negative thoughts, the inner opponent will do that for you, to think positive thoughts however takes a lot of effort.

This from James Clavel's book *Shogan*:

To think bad thoughts is really the easiest thing in the world. If you leave your mind to its self it will spiral you down into ever increasing unhappiness. To think good thoughts, however, requires effort. This is one of the things that training and discipline are about. So teach you mind to dwell on sweet perfumes, the touch of silk, tender rain drops against the shoji, the tranquillity of dawn, then at length you won't have to make such an effort and you will be of value to yourself.

Left to its own devices, the mind can be a self-detonating time bomb of negativity that will spiral you down into ever increasing misery. Dealing with the inner opponent is firstly about understanding that *everyone* has an inner opponent (often there is more than one voice), though very few come to terms with him, and also understanding that we will never reach our full potential whilst he has the run of our heads. Mr Negative is very controllable, if you know how.

These are three ways that I have found successful in dealing with Mr Negative:

1) Thought rejection

Reject the negative thoughts by completely ignoring them, not listening to anything that Mr Negative says, thus leaving him no mental ledge on which to perch.

This is harder than it seems and demands self-discipline. Negative thoughts have a habit of swimming into your mind, uninvited and at will. Don't have any of it. It is your mind, you are in charge. Occupy your mind by reading, listening to the radio, by keeping yourself busy, watching the box, anything to take your mind away from the negative thoughts. Don't give in and panic with the thoughts because that will cause them to multiply tenfold and then twenty fold, before you know it your mind has been overrun by negative emotion that can quickly turn to depression. So, just ignore them. In combat keep check on the negative thoughts by focusing on the situation at hand, if negative thoughts try to enter your head do not even acknowledge them.

2) Thought counter attack

If you can't come to terms with this try thought counter attack (this is the method that I practice). Fight your inner opponent by countering every *negative* thought he throws at you with a *positive* thought of your own.

Inner opponent	*You're scared.*
Your counter	*No, I'm not scared.*
Inner opponent	*You can't handle this situation.*
Your counter	*Yes, I can handle this situation, I can handle anything.*
Inner opponent	*You're out of your depth, you'll never cope.*
Your counter	*I'm not out of my depth and I can cope, in fact I'll cope easily.*
Inner opponent	*You'll fail and everyone will laugh.*
Your counter	*If that's the worse that can happen, I can handle it.*

3) Repetitive Mantra

Just keep repeating to yourself: 'I can handle it, I can handle it, I can handle it'. This allows no room for negative thoughts to infiltrate your mind.

By controlling your thoughts you will erase the negativity. You have to learn not to take any crap from the inner opponent and fight, tooth and nail, every time that he rears his ugly head. Watch out though, he can be a cheeky beggar, if you are not vigilant he will try to sneak in when you least expect. Even the feelings that accompany negativity can be countered with defiance. I always tell myself, 'Do your worst, I can handle it, I can handle twice what you're giving me'. The biggest fight is always with yourself and the more wins you get under your belt the stronger you become and the weaker your inner opponent becomes. Once you have the inner opponent under control you are well on the way.

Fight back negativity right from the onset. Each negative thought you allow to penetrate your psyche may, and usually does, erode a small part of your *will* until eventually you are defeated. I work on the premise that *negative begets negative begets defeat*. As a parallel, *positive begets positive, begets victory*.

Your greatest enemy in times of adversity is your own mind. Tell your inner opponent that you *can handle it*. Once you have come to terms with Mr. Negative and have learned to accept fear as a friend, allow adrenalin the run of your body, don't let yourself panic. Knowledge is power. By understanding your own body, by understanding the mechanics of adrenalin/fear you can learn self-control. Panic is catalysed by ignorance, by not understanding your own body, or its workings. Most people, in most situations are not defeated by their assailants, they are defeated by their own mind.

Adrenalin is a natural feeling that should be accepted with out panic. There is no way around these feelings, everyone feels them, they are a part and parcel of adversity.

Now let's look at the *excuse syndrome*. This is where the inner opponent will find you many seemingly legitimate excuses not to pressure test, you have to recognise these and be honest with yourself. Don't let silly excuses hinder your development. Whilst you might think that you will not get or use excuses to avoid the adversity of Animal Day you will get them and you will be tempted to use them, it is natural to feel these feelings, just don't go with them because if you're not getting wet then you're not learning to swim.

"If there is no adversity there is no advance."

The mind, or more specifically the inner opponent, will throw tangible or intangible excuses in your way to slow you down or stop you completely in your plight to pressure test.

The harder the confrontation becomes the more the excuses will flow. Look out for them, they will come.

If you really want to succeed nothing will stand in your way and no excuse will be good enough, if you are struggling any excuse will suddenly become a legitimate excuse.

By first recognising and then overcoming these excuses you will develop an indomitable spirit due to your overthrow of the inner opponent. Also gained will be enlightenment, because in order to get past the more difficult excuses it is necessary to dissect yourself

mentally, admitting and recognising your weaknesses in order to be able to confront and overcome them, and thus get past whatever stumbling block it is that's holding you back.

The excuses that the inner opponent invents/finds are or can be many splendoured. They may be tangible or intangible. Basically speaking the excuses usually fall into three categories, though they are uniform in one element, they are all reasons to avoid adversity and pressure testing.

Recognising these excuses will help immeasurably in your bid to overcome them.

The three categories are: *Tangible*, *Intangible* and *Silly excuses*.

Tangible excuses

These are incidental excuses that are responsible for more bottle drops than any other. Broken bones, torn ligaments, twisted ankles, illnesses (even other people's illnesses), the list goes on.

Of course with a serious injury it is foolish to keep training as the injury/illness may be aggravated by your continuance. However, minor injuries should not deter you from conscientious practice.

You can quite easily train around such injuries. If your left hand is injured, train your right or vice versa. I was in and out of hospital, and plaster, for two years and had, in that time, two operations for a broken right wrist. I never missed training once and used the time to perfect my left hand techniques. I have also had broken bones all over my body, but still managed to train around my injuries. Training under such adverse conditions requires and develops real will-power and is a great character builder.

With the more serious injury/illness that does lay you off, the danger lies in whether or not you get back to training after your convalescence. From my experience, most people do not. While you are recovering try to visit your training establishment to maintain your ties and enthusiasm, this will greatly help in your re-start program when the obstacle of bad health is removed.

A lot of people use their injuries to opt out because they were finding the going getting tough anyway, but remember this, if it was easy everybody and his dog would be good.

Intangible excuses

These can be as destructive in your advancement as the tangibles and in a psychological sense far more painful. Also, because they are mental as opposed to physical, they can quite often be very difficult to admit or detect. The greatest intangible is *physical contact*, sparring or getting hit. A great percentage of people leave training because they are frightened of sparring. Even at the boxing club when I was coaching, it was common knowledge that you lost 85% of your new starters after you put them in the ring for the first time. The only way to overcome this is, firstly, to admit it. Don't be ashamed, everyone feels the same so you're not on your own. Secondly, confront it again and again until you become desensitized to it, and take heart, it does get better. The more you spar and put yourself in the firing line the better and more confident you will feel. In the world of real fighting, pain, unfortunately, is the ugly hand maiden, so it is imperative that you develop at least some tolerance for it if you want any chance of surviving a real situation.

Boredom

"It's getting boring." Boredom is another major excuse that loses many people from the martial arts arena and in my opinion, it is a

lazy excuse. To develop a technique into an instinctive reflex, to develop power, speed, endurance, footwork, mental muscle or anything else worth having for that matter, requires repetition, and what is repetition if it isn't boring. Repetition is practised by the student revising for his doctorate, and paradoxically, by the soldier perfecting a bayonet attack. Swimmers will practice hours and hours a day perfecting a stroke and jugglers will juggle until their hands bleed, all in pursuit of excellence. As martial artists, we are no different. For one technique to be effective in a *live* situation we must do a thousand in the gym.

Boredom is the lazy man's excuse not to train. You treat boredom as another challenge that must be bettered if advancement is to be attained. When boredom sets in you must use concentration to push it back out again. Sheer concentration on the technique you are practising will erode boredom. You must practice a technique until you are sick to death of it, then you will get good at it. I have also found that people use the excuse of boredom when the going is getting a little too tough for them. *Oh I'm getting bored with this* can usually be translated as *I can't handle it*.

It is surprising, but true, that when people start training they will let nothing get in their way, nothing keeps them from their training, it's the most important thing in their lives, etc. Then when things get a little demanding every thing gets in their way, all of a sudden your training times collide with something else, or the wife's moaning, I've got to do overtime, take the dog to the vet, go to a funeral. Hey, believe me I know I made up all the same excuses before I got honest with myself. Don't take any bullshit from the inner opponent.

Lack of enjoyment

Lack of enjoyment in training is a brother to boredom. Another feeble excuse. Enjoyment in training comes and goes, nobody enjoys it all of the time. And certainly when you pressure test enjoyment goes right out of the window. The real enjoyment comes from the fruits of training rather than the actual training itself. After all, to become proficient we must push ourselves through the pain of a gruelling training session, who in their right mind enjoys pain, (my profuse apologies to all you masochists out there!). If you are going through a bad patch of not enjoying your training, stick with it and try to treat the training as a mundane task that has to be done, the enjoyment will return. It's unrealistic to expect enjoyment all the time out of something so physically and mentally demanding, when the enjoyment is there make the best of it, when it isn't, cope. It's all part of the character building process.

As with boredom this is usually another excuse to cover fear. Don't fall for it.

Lack of Improvement/success

Another favourite excuse for throwing in the towel is, *I don't seem to be getting any better*. This is one of the mind's best finishers and kills off many students with the suddenness of cyanide tea, after all, what is the point of continuing in training if you're not getting any better? If I may use a metaphor, it is a propelling spiral that picks up momentum very quickly, and just as it seems to be reaching its pinnacle of speed, it starts, or at least it would appear to be, going backwards. So it is with the martial arts, in the beginning you are learning something new every session and improvement can be as fast as the aforementioned metaphoric spiral. All of a sudden your advancement seems to be slowing down and in some cases you seem, (like the spiral), to be going backward instead of forward,

but it is only an illusion. After such a quick advance even a slight decrease in speed may seem like a backward spiral, usually it is only the person himself who sees or thinks he sees this supposed decline, everyone around him will be seeing his improvement but him.

From my experience and as irony would have it, it is usually the better student who thinks he isn't improving. Every day and every session that you train will bring you, visible or invisible, large or small, some advancement. The child that you see everyday will show no visible change or growth, to the person who only sees the same child every few months, the change is so obvious that they sometimes can't believe it's the same child. And so it is with improvement in training, sometimes it is so gradual that on a day to day basis it is almost unnoticeable, but it will be there.

Silly Excuses

These are the most infuriating and are always employed by people who are using the *silly excuse* to cover a deeper, more underlying reason or problem, probably one of those in the last category. These are the worst, (and sometimes the funniest) reasons for missing single sessions or even packing in all together, because it means that the person employing the *silly excuse* cannot come to terms with the real reason.

To my mind this puts him right at the bottom of the proverbial mountain with a long way to go. He'll probably never make it unless he gets some real self honesty very quickly.

At the risk of repeating myself a bigger part of being able to confront is being able to understand. It is very hard to destroy what you cannot create. Hopefully this chapter and indeed this book will help you to understand your own body so that you are better able to deal with its reactions to conflict.

Chapter Three

Understanding Your Art

This is a sensitive area. So many people think that they have the complete art and that no one else has. They believe they are open-minded and others are not and that they have all the answers where others have only questions. Even the so called *new wave* martial artists who left tradition because of blinkered senior instructors and *the classical mess*, now wear their own blinkers like a thorny crown and have, in a way, created their own classical mess.

Every system has something to offer, and to say that they do not is to be blinkered. To trash all traditionalists simply because they are traditional, or to trash other stylists because they do not follow the same way as us would also be very blinkered. The one thing that all martial arts have in common is that they all have something to offer if we would only open our eyes wide enough to see.

Understanding your own art means little more than being honest, even if it is only with yourself.

Is your art a kicking art, punching art, or a grappling art? Is it close range, long range, semi-contact, full contact, an attacking art or a defensive art? Whatever your art is analyse what it is not, that will be where your weakness lies. It is also wise to place your main range under pressure just to make sure that you are as good at it (or it is as good) as you think.

It is also important to analyse whether your main range, be it kicking, punching or grappling is pre-dominantly short range or long range.

Are you a long-range kicker or a short-range kicker? Long range puncher or short range puncher. Whatever you are, again your weakness will lie in the range - within your main range - that you are weakest at. Then what you have to ask yourself is *am I effective at my main range?* Of course everyone likes to think that they are, but often they are not. This over-confidence often comes from being the big fish in a little pond. Take a step out of your comfort zone, step into a bigger pool and see just how good you are. Over-confidence is a killer, getting into the big pool and feeling completely out of your depth can be very scary, but quite liberating. I always place myself in a class where I know I am at the bottom, and then climb to the top, once I am at the top I move on to another class where I am at the bottom again. If, whilst you are reading this, you feel that you are already at the top then I can tell without even meeting you that you're not, just the fact that you think you are automatically disqualifies you from being so. Get down off that sugar pedestal. Look a little harder and you'll find some one to push you.

As an example, I would class you as a good puncher if you could do three rounds with a good boxer, I would consider you a good kicker if you could do three with a good Thai boxer and I would certainly consider you good in close if you could go five minutes with a good wrestler or Judoka.

As a young Karataka I was pre-dominantly a kicker, but thought myself a good puncher too. I'd worked on the weights all my life and had played with grappling so thought my ground work was competent. When I tried to place my limited skills in the real world of fighting I quickly realised that my main range, kicking, was immediately neutralised by my environment. Most fights start at conversation range, this being punching range, so there was no

room to kick in most situations, if there was room it was quickly gobbled up by a greedy aggressor who wanted to be *in my face*. I was a strong puncher, I could hit the bag hard, but basically I was a long range, straight puncher and conditioned to pull my blows on impact.

Real fighting is very close range and often demands the better suited hook or uppercut, but they weren't on my curriculum. The first time I hit someone I automatically pulled the punch on impact, I also felt out of range, a range that seemed to disappear before my eyes and wouldn't stay still for a second. The first time I went to grappling in the street I didn't have a clue what to do, I bludgeoned my way through and made a hard and long job out of some thing that should have been clinical. I was also completely unaccustomed to raw aggression and didn't know how to react to verbal. People were throwing verbal attacks and I didn't know how to defend, counter attack or even simply attack. Most of what goes in a real fight is not in the physical it's psychological. Openers, weakeners, primers and even finishing blows are secured with dialogue, the attacker using verbal missiles to attack the psyche. All I knew, all my art had taught me, was the physical response, a little like teaching someone how to dive in the swimming pool but not teaching him how to swim.

It is true that fighting arts teach you distancing and timing etc, but the distancing in the street is different from that of the dojo and so is the timing because the fighting is so frantic and staccato, it is also different because it's enforced by the enemy and the environment.

So be realistic when evaluating your art: if you think that your art is good, test it. Not just at strongest end but also at the weakest end, where the leaks are, then set about sealing up those leaks. As they

say, *a chain is only as strong as its weakest link*. If you are a crap grappler, or a crap puncher then you are only as strong as that weakness (crap!) because the first time it goes to that range might be the very first time you get into a fight.

One of the main weaknesses that I have found in the arts that I have studied, and I have studied most of them, is that they all, with the exception of western boxing, condition their practitioners to fight defensively, certainly when they teach the self-defense aspect of the art. They teach their practitioners to wait for the attacker to attack, then block and counter attack. In the real world? TOO LATE! Too late by a long shot. It doesn't take much logic to realise that action is quicker than reaction.

If you let someone attack you first and expect to block and counter think again. In the dojo, when the distance and conditions are perfect and when you know what the attacker is going to attack with and when and how and with how much intensity, sure then it will work. Outside, from eighteen inches, with no prior knowledge of which attack and when or even why; not quite so likely.

It is my opinion, after spending a decade working with violence, that a defensive art in a live situation is about as useful as a cat flap in an elephant house. I'm not saying that it won't work in ideal circumstances on the odd occasion or for the 9's and 10's (on a skill scale of 1-10, 9's and 10's are the cream of the crop, 2's and 3's the average practitioner) but in normal circumstances and for the average-good practitioner, very unlikely. In a real situation if you are not attacking you'll be getting attacked. If you are facing more than one opponent, and waiting to defend, you are in even more trouble because multiple attackers do not stand in line waiting their turn to attack, they strike as one. If you think that blocking

one person is hard try blocking two or three or four . . . at the same time. There may be a system out there that can do what I am saying cannot be done, if there is I have never seen it.

In *Animal Day*, you may test your system to the full where you will be working with uncompliant opponents who will be unsympathetic to weakness in spirit or technique. If you hold your kick out too long or pivot on one leg after retracting the kick you will be grabbed and grappled. If your punches lack power or accuracy or if you over commit or under-commit, they will be crushed without mercy. If you are a grappler with no knowledge of punching, kicking or atemi jutsu (striking whilst grappling) you will pick up major injuries as you close distance or inside grappling range. In Animal Day you will see little or no trapping, the distance is only there for a fleeting second before it is swallowed up by flailing/colliding bodies.

If compliancy reigns, and it seems to in many of the systems around today, everything will work, it will also be very impressive. A wrist lock is excruciating if you allow someone to place it on you, because of the pain you may think, *yeah, that's brilliant, really effective*. Don't forget though, it is only effective because you allowed it to be put on. The time when a technique is effective is when it is put on against your will. Of course it is good to practice, to a degree, with compliancy, that's how you learn and perfect technique, but at some stage you will have to practice against mass uncompliancy to see if it will really work. Everything changes when a situation becomes *live*. Distances change, attitudes change, timing changes, stamina, will, pain tolerance . . . it all changes. I was talking to Jim McDonnell (European pro boxing champion) yesterday about this exact thing and he told me about the time he and one of his stable mates met to fight for a vacant title (this story is told by Jim in *Fear - the friend of exceptional people*). Now in the gym and on paper the two fighters

were absolutely equal on all counts and when they sparred in the gym there was nothing in it. Every one said what a cracking fight it was going to be, all expecting it to go the full distance. When the fight actually took place Jim stopped his man in the first round. Jim puts this down to the fact that he could perform the same at show time as he could in the relatively safe environs of the practice gym, his opponent could not. He could do it in the gym all day long but add pressure to the scenario and he fell apart.

Bob Spour, my friend and top Thai man told me of the time he was teaching one of his senior students knife fighting, the fighting was very close range, fast and skilful. When they stopped for a breather Bob exchanged the dummy practice knifes for live blades and said, 'O.K. let's try with real knives now'. Suddenly the distance changed, what was very short range suddenly became very long range and what was fast, skilful and flowing became slow, stuttered and amateur. The introduction of pressure puts every thing into true perspective. That's what Animal Day will do for you, give you a true perspective of REAL, so forget all this bollocks about *we daren't practice full out because our art is too dangerous,* try it full out and see just how dangerous it is, I guarantee that it will not be so dangerous as you think it will be.

One of the Gracie's opponents when accepting a challenge with one of the Gracie's students said, 'Perhaps I should wear gloves, I don't want to hurt my opponent too much.' Gracie replied, 'Try and hurt him as much as you can.' Within seconds of the fight beginning the Gracie student took his opponent to the floor, without even receiving a blow, and finished the fight with a choke.

The acid test of *real* is pressure. No pressure no guarantee.

So have a good look at your own art and see where the weaknesses lie, if you're not sure try Animal Day to find out. When you have found out work and improve the strengths and weaknesses. No one style has all the answers so you may have to beg, steal and borrow from other systems or perhaps dig a little deeper into your own system for some hidden bunkai (applications hidden in Kata and forms) but more than anything else . . . be honest with yourself.

Here is a little run down on what I find effective/ineffective about different systems.

Karate

Taking into consideration the different style etc, Karate is at its best whilst in kicking range, comfortable though basic in punching range, and completely at a loss in grappling range. A fifth Dan Karataka is a white belt grappler. Many of the basic blocks and stances are good for building a strong body and spirit, but are of little direct use in real combat. Much of the training, depending of course on the instructor, is unrealistic and largely inapplicable. The biggest fault with traditional training, certainly in this decade, and this applies to most other martial arts, is the lack of communication and honesty between instructor and student. The student needs to be told exactly how it is, how and why a *live* situation is going to make them feel scared shitless, that some of the big, slow movements that they practice are not recommended for the real deal. Most instructors will not or cannot pass on the kind of enlightenment a student needs if he's going to survive in such a savage arena. Some of the top martial arts instructors in the world have little or no real fighting experience, so they are not in a good position to teach what they (do not) know to others. All they can

teach is how they think it might be. I'm not saying that it makes them bad instructors of their art, on the contrary, they may be great instructors, but you can't teach what you don't know.

Due to the fact that grappling is not allowed during sparring, sloppy technique is inadvertently encouraged: slowly retracted kicks, over-committed kicks, unrealistically high and flash kicks, pivoting on one leg after retraction of the kick, leg fencing (both fighters standing on one leg and fencing with their feet), deep stances that impede fast movement, low or no guard that leaves the major target (the head) completely unprotected, only using straight punches and constantly pulling those punches on impact with the target, not practising any grappling and lastly being frightened of admitting that Karate does have weaknesses for fear of offending their art, instructors, masters or even themselves and getting deeply offended by anyone else that has the insight to point out the weaknesses to them.

Gung fu

This is very similar to Karate in that it teaches more kicking than punching, with the exception of Wing chun and one or two other systems which do teach close range techniques, but again no, or very little, grappling. They are often guilty of believing that they have an art that does not need to practice ground fighting and theirs is the ultimate art. There is no such thing and such thoughts are, at best naive. Similarly little pressure testing is done to really test and perfect technique. Those that normally manage to make these arts complete are the instructors who have a wealth of experience behind them in other systems such as wrestling and judo, or boxing.

Judo and Wrestling

Both are now predominantly sports, and out of all the systems that I have practiced these were definitely the most demanding. They pressure test severely but again only within the periphery of their own rules. Whilst in grappling range these exponents are definitely potentate, whilst out of range, they are like ducks out of water, though it has to be said that in match fighting, which is very different from street fighting, they definitely rule.

Aikido

In general this is a very restrictive to the average player because it is almost (if not totally) defensive. The top men in this art may make it work in a live situation, but I don't see it being effective for the average player. The best means of defence, without a shadow of a doubt, is attack. Anything long winded and over technical is of little use as street fights are over in anything from one to five seconds. Its practice in the majority of dojos is totally unrealistic, the attacks that are thrown to practice defence are benign and completely out of context with the real world of violence. As an art I find Aikido beautiful, as a self-defence I find it sadly misdirected. Some of the basic locks are nice as a part of the support system, but that is about all I can find, as far as self-defence is concerned, of any worth.

Thai Boxing

What a ferocious art. Thai is one of the few systems that nearly has it all and no one can doubt the power of the techniques. The punching in Thai is not so good as in Western boxing, but it is a lot better than any of the other systems. Its only real flaw is vertical and especially horizontal grappling.

In vertical grappling Thai is good though slightly unrealistic, not in its power or technique but more in the fact that, because it does not allow ground fighting, the exponents are too vertical and so easy to take to the floor by a system that does allow ground fighting. The atemi in vertical fighting is very strong and very effective, in reality it would be very difficult to apply the same techniques to someone who is not fighting to Thai rules. Vertical grappling, in a real situation is usually only there for a fleeting moment before it goes to ground. Against someone with knowledge a Thai boxer, the same as other trained or untrained fighters, would be taken quickly to ground.

Ju-Jitsu

As yet I have not seen any Ju-jitsu that has really impressed me, except for one or two people like Dave Turton and Trev Roberts who are exceptional, and of course who can dispute the indomitable Gracie family in America. More generally, though, Ju-jitsu tends again to be too defensive, *when the opponent attacks we defend with*…etc. Defence has to be addressed because it is not always possible to read a situation and be *first,* but when 99% of what you teach relies on having to wait for the attacker to attack, something seems acutely amiss, and when it comes to fighting numbers this strategy is absolute suicide and will not work. Also, with few exceptions, all the techniques are practised against designated attacks and with compliancy, pressure from training is sadly missing. Many Ju-jitsu practitioners tend also to lean heavily to grappling, this is fine in the one on one fight but problematic in numbers fighting where it is difficult to grapple more than one attacker at the same time, several of my friends have been stabbed by the friends or girlfriends of the person that they are tied up with, also grappling range is unique in that once sought it can seldom be changed for another more suitable, you are held there by the grip

on your adversity. I also find that a lot of the Ju-Jitsu systems no longer include randori (free fighting), this is what takes the teeth out of it really, if they re-introduce this I think there would be a marked difference.

The concept of throwing an assailant cleanly and then moving on to a second attacker is also rarely viable because most attackers pull the thrower to the floor when they are thrown. Consider this fact: 9 out of 10 fights start at punching range. How much time do you in your system designate to the practice of accurate and powerful close range punching? If you can't get impact on a bag or pads in the controlled environment it is hugely unlikely that you will suddenly miraculously develop those attributes when a situation becomes *live*. I'm amazed by the amount of people, many of a very high grade, that can't generate impact or power when it comes to hitting a training implement.

Most of my training revolves around punching because I know from experience that that is where it is going to happen. So if your system doesn't involve a lot of punching, think again.

Western Boxing

Western boxing is definitely the best whilst in punching range and every session is a severe pressure test, again within its own rules, but in kicking and grappling range it comes a very sorry second place. However, these boxers are so deft with their hands that it rarely ever gets to the other ranges.

A boxer with knowledge of other fighting systems is a very dangerous person. Real fights mostly start at punching range and, if the puncher is a good one, end there also. For this reason, if I had the choice of only one art for the physical aspect of self-defence it

would be boxing, if I had the choice of two arts it would be boxing and wrestling/Judo. If I had the choice of three it would be boxing, wrestling and Thai.

The street fighter

What helps the street fighter swim clear of the maelstrom of trained fighters is that they lack very little. Every technique they use has been tried and tested in live situations. They can kick, punch and grapple like they were born to do it. Most trained fighters are still embryos in the womb of combat whilst the street fighter is fully matured. They control the *duck syndrome* with consummate ease and put most opponents out of the fight before they even know they are in it. They are fighting chameleons, adapting themselves to any given situation and changing their fight plan to better any fighter. If they are facing a fighter that is or appears to be a bit *handy* they may act weak or scared so as to mentally disarm them, then strike out fiercely when least expected to. If the opponent looks as though he may have a chink in his mental armour, the fighter may act over confident or strong to psyche him out and back him down, thus winning with out the use of violence, or, if and when necessary, a combination of them both.

When fighting has commenced the street fighter will, if he has not already finished the fight, assess the opponent's artillery automatically and fight them at their weakest range, forcing a kicker to punch or a puncher to kick or a puncher and kicker to grapple etc.

More than anything the street fighter will use guile as opposed to force, his main artillery will be dialogue, this is used to prime, disarm and psyche out the opponent. His power base will be deception and innate cunning. He may go through and win several hundred

encounters with only one or two techniques, beating the man with hundreds of techniques up his sleeve whilst he is in mental log jam trying to figure out which of the hundreds he should apply. He will also use everything in his environment as an incidental weapon.

His weakness lies in the fact that he is usually a five second fighter, every second beyond that and the fight goes more and more against him. The one or two techniques that he so favours at each range will be quickly exhausted and the stamina that he has not got will disappear at a rate of knots. Because he is so unused to anyone going the distances and the fact that he is feeling the excruciating pain of oxygen debt (this comes when the stamina goes) he will often panic at this stage and his bottle may start to go. It may take a minute to get him in this state, though, and that minute may be the longest that you ever experience.

So try to be honest when evaluating yourself and your system. If you can't do that you will not even be able to get on the first rung of the ladder.

Chapter Four

An Introduction to the Inner Opponent

We have already spoken about the inner opponent. You will all have had to come to terms with him at some stage of your training. In this short chapter I would just like to introduce him in case anyone out there thinks that he does not exist, or perhaps can not quite comprehend what I mean by inner opponent. I will list a few exercises that I would like you to do, the reasons for this are twofold, one is to allow you to hear the voice of negativity and the other is to allow you to see how much control you have over him at this present time.

If you find yourself giving in very early and unable to control the inner opponent then it is fair to say that you are not in control of the inner opponent. Obviously that will revert the more you confront and overcome him.

I shall try to list several different exercises in the hope that I will find one that you do not like or are not comfortable with, don't choose the easy ones that would be defeating the object. You must look at the list and choose the hardest exercise, for you. If they are all too easy then choose one of your own that is hard. I would also like you to do the exercise for the next three days, this will allow the inner opponent to try and weaken you in anticipation. Whichever exercise you do try, do it to failure - that is until you can no longer physically do one more repetition. This doesn't mean when the inner opponent tells you to stop, it means when you cannot physically manage one more second or repetition.

When the inner opponent does click in, this may happen before you even start the exercise, especially on the second and third day. Try to override him and continue for as long as you can.

These are the stages where he will click in, depending upon your fitness and control; The way to control the inner opponent is detailed in chapter two, **Understanding Yourself**, and in greater detail in *Fear - the friend of exceptional people*.

Anticipation
When there is anticipation of adversity, boredom, pain etc the inner opponent will click in and try to get you to abort, 'Why are you doing this to yourself?' he will ask, 'you don't need this, you've got nothing to prove.' This is especially so when there is a time lapse between anticipation and confrontation. This is when he can be at his most destructive because he has time to wear you down and talk you out of the confrontation. Your most vulnerable time will be when your mind is not occupied.

Pre-confrontation
Many people get right to the door of confrontation and then fail to open it, the inner opponent taking one final deceptive swipe to force abortion.

In-confrontation
You have actually faced confrontation and are within it when the inner opponent strikes again, first at:

Boredom
'Oh this is getting boring, I've had enough, I'm calling it a day.'

Second at:

Pain
'Crikey, this is hurting, can't be good for me, I'm going to stop. I think I've done enough'.

Thirdly:

Exhaustion
'Give in . . . give in . . . give in.'

Fourthly:

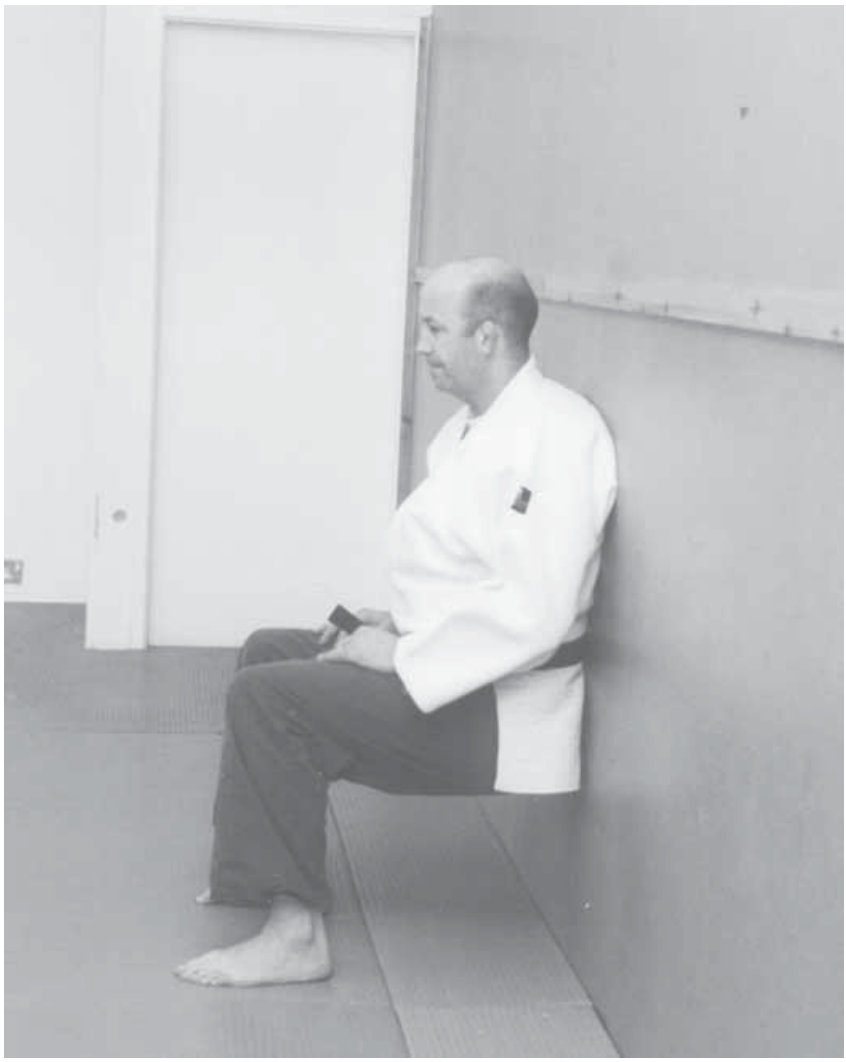
Nausea
'I can't bear to go on. I feel like I'm dying. What am I doing here? I don't need this.'

And lastly:

Afterwards
'O.K. you've proved that you can do it, that's enough now, you don't need to do any more.'

As we said earlier, look out for the inner opponent, the excuses and the cop-outs, they will materialise and must be overcome. Here are the exercises, chose the hardest one for you and try to go to failure, obviously I don't want anyone to physically injure themselves so just do as much as you can without making yourself ill.

1) Roman chair



Sit, as per illustration, with your back against the wall in a seated position with your knees bent at a 90 degree angle (parallel to the floor), let your arms lay limply by your side and be sure not to put your hands on your legs for support, also make sure that you have the correct angle, don't cheat yourself, if your knees are bent to much or not enough the pressure is taken away from the thighs and the exercise is wasted.

2) Step ups

Stand in front of a chair or bench, as per illustration, at about your own knee height, place your hands on your head (or by your side) and step up and down for as many repetitions as you can. Keep your hands on your head at all times.

3) Wind sprints

Stand at one end of a room about 50 feet long and sprint to one end and then back. Go back and forth for thirty seconds, you must sprint as fast as you can. At the end of the thirty seconds rest for 15 seconds before repeating the same exercise for 25 seconds, 15 seconds rest, sprint for twenty seconds, 15 seconds rest, then sprint for 20 seconds and 15 seconds rest then finally sprint for 10 seconds.

If you feel like slowing down towards the end of the sprint, or for that matter at any time during the sprint make sure that you do not.

4) Running

If you are already a good runner this exercise will not be a good one for you, chose one that you are not good at or at least unaccustomed to.

Go out for a run and go as far as you can, see which goes first, your stamina or your will.

5) Fart-legging

The same as with running only with fart-legging you should run 100 yds and then sprint 100 yds with no rest in between.

6) Staggered press-ups

Make a press-up position, as per illustration, make sure that your back is straight. Lower your body down until your chest is just touching, but not resting on the floor. Hold for the count of five seconds and then push back up to the start position. Repeat the process for as many reps as you can before your arms give way.

7) Star jump-burpees

From a standing position, jump high in the air and spread your arms and legs like a star, as you land go into a crouch position and shoot your legs out backwards so that you are in a press up position then shoot them back to the crouch position and stand back up, as per illustration. With out pause or rest repeat the exercise from star jump to burpee. Do as many as you can.

8) Pull ups
Hanging from a bar or doorframe with your palms facing forward pull yourself up until the back of your neck touches the bar/frame, then lower back to the start position, make sure that you do not rest your feet on the floor. Repeat as many as you can. When you've done as many as you can, have a ten second break and do as many as you can again, then a ten second break and as many as you can for a third and final time.

If there is nothing here that you find demanding enough use some thing of your own invention, as long as it incites the inner opponent into action. What these exercises will do is allow you to see the inner opponent on a more tangible level. This allows you then to recognise him when you come to confront Animal Day itself, and also when he pops up in other aspects of your life. By stepping into adversity and summoning up the inner opponent we allow ourselves practice in fighting him. So next time you want a sparring session, don't ring up a mate, summon up the inner opponent. If you can control him you can achieve anything.

As they say (whoever they are), real power is not getting others to do as you want, it is getting ourselves to do what we want.

Chapter Five

The Progressive Pyramid

If you have read any of my previous books (if you haven't, why haven't you?) you will know that I like pyramids because they allow a steady build up to a desired goal. So rather than just jump in the deep end and have Animal Day you can build up to it in pyramidic stages, the same as you would when attempting to lift heavyweights in the gym. You wouldn't try to lift three hundred pounds on the first lift, you would pyramid your weight, gradually increasing the poundage so that your body and mind can get used to handling progressively more weight until you reach the desired three hundred pounds. We shall do this by practising restricted sparring, restricted in content and restricted in control, progressing eventually to no restrictions and no-control, this being Animal Day itself. Bear in mind though that Animal Day is anything that places you under pressure, if the thought of putting on the gloves and doing three rounds with a boxer scares the pants off you then that's Animal Day.

I would like to break this down into categories that will work for you irrespective of what style you practice, some of the exercises will favour your particular system and others will not, it is important that you do all the prescribed exercises and not miss the ones that you don't like. If you do that you will have wasted your time. The whole premise is based on being uncomfortable, that's where the growth is, if you are comfortable you are already stagnant.

The first thing will be totally to isolate the different distances and practice them within slight restrictions, then later to intermingle them with less and less restriction until you reach the stage where anything goes. Here are the stages:

• Chapter six: *grappling*.
This involving vertical and horizontal grappling, atemi, biting etc.

• Chapter seven: *punching*.
This involving long range, mid range and close range boxing and eventually elbows.

• Chapter eight: *kicking*.
This involving long and short range kicking, stomping and independent sweeping.

• Chapter nine: *weapons fighting*.
Sparring with a variety of weapons with unrehearsed attacks using either marker pens as knifes or other pretend weapons.

• Chapter ten: *combining distances*.
Restricted sparring combining all ranges.

• Chapter eleven: *Animal Day*.

With weapons and without. For obvious reasons the weapons cannot be real all though the empty hand techniques will be full contact. With my own people we wear gloves for the standing work so that you can hit as hard as you like, similar to boxing or Thai, if the fight hits the floor we strip the gloves off the fighters so that they can use the grips necessary for grappling. Because of the inherent dangers of bare knuckle fighting we restrict the floor blows to slaps. This is necessary; if you don't have some restrictions the injuries will be catastrophic.

Whatever your art it should fall into one of these categories, the weapons chapter is really for the Aikido people and those that think their art is competent in weapons defence. No matter what your art you should go through all of the chapters and try to make what you know work for you and if it doesn't work find some thing that does.

Chapter Six

Grappling

Grappling, to the majority that does not practice the art, will be the most demanding of all the endeavours next to Animal Day itself and should be practised with great caution using a matted area and acquiring a good knowledge of how to break fall. The tap system should be observed at all times. If an opponent taps himself, the floor or his opponent this will signify submission and the opponent should release the hold immediately. For added safety always practice in no less than threes so that a third party will be able to observe in case one of the fighters gets into trouble and for whatever reason is unable to tap submission.

Biting

Are you shocked by the fact that I have included biting in this text? If you are then you are unprepared for a real encounter. Many fighters – like it or not – initiate their attack with a bite, some use it instinctively to finish an opponent. If you are not at the very least apt in defending against the bite then the chances are you will be beaten by the first person that uses this technique. The only way to learn bite-defense is to include biting in your sparring. Many of the techniques that you now practice will have to change when the bite is included, anything that is left anywhere near the teeth of a determined attacker will be bitten to the bone, even severed, I know of many fighters who have had noses and ears bitten clean off. Some of the more callous fighters out there will also either swallow the ear/nose after biting it off or stamp on the severed article after spitting it out so that a surgeon is unable to stitch it back on again. There will also be occasions- it has happened to me – where your only way of surviving a situation is to attack your aggressor with a bite. You may choose not to, for what ever reason, and that is your prerogative, but if you do you will lose and maybe even die. If you find the thought of biting some one repugnant and feel you will never be able to do it, include the biting into your curriculum anyway, just so that you can learn to defend against it.

When biting an opponent in gym fighting one should bite and release, only applying enough force to let the opponent know that he has been bitten. Don't try to get a submission with a bite, it is enough to know that in a real situation the bite would probably have secured you the victory.

Butting

It is an important part of your curriculum that you learn to butt, when the distance is right, as an instinct.

Again, in the real world a good butt can finish a fight, if you receive the butt it may finish you so it is good, in training, not only to practice attacking with a butt, but also defending against the same. It is not always necessary to use full contact with the head, it can be a little too devastating in the controlled environment, unless your opponent is wearing protective head gear. Personally I use just enough force to let my opponent know that he has been caught so that he'll know better the next time.

Gouging

I do put pressure on the eyes when sparring but I never inflict damage by scraping and gauging, this could easily blind your opponent. It is imperative though that you learn to defend against eye attacks in grappling so they must be included, again with control.

Grappling again will be split into stages. Try to become familiar with all the different aspects before you join them together; they are as follows.

Vertical grappling
This will be split into bulling, just atemi, clean throwing without atemi, defending, attacking, all out vertical grappling.

Ground work
This will be split into pins and hold-downs with and without atemi, escapes with and without atemi and all out ground fighting.

All-out grappling
Combining vertical and horizontal grappling.

I will take vertical grappling first. Because this is not a book about technique please refer to my other books, if you have no prior knowledge, for relevant techniques to employ in all the different sections. For the time that you go all out I recommend that you use some sort of protective gear.

Vertical grappling

Bulling
Hold your opponent in any grip you wish and pull each other around with force, not trying to throw or strike, just control the grip, the person who controls the grip is usually the person who controls the fight. A good hold for bulling is the wrestlers hold of neck and arm (as illus). This exercise will help you to become familiar with a grappling embrace and help develop a good steady stance. It also helps the practitioners get used to being touched or mauled, many people feel very restricted, threatened and even claustrophobic when being grabbed. Get familiar with this before moving on to the next step.

Bulling

Just atemi

From any grip you can get on your opponent, look for possible strikes with the head, knees, feet, hands etc. Still not looking to throw the opponent and using good control with the strikes. This will allow you to see how difficult it is to strike once in vertical grappling. If you think that you may be able to use trapping, try it here. Slowly build up the speed and lessen the control until you are going all out. Once you are going all out don't let the opponent do anything that you don't want him to do. In all-out there is no compliancy, if a technique or concept is good it will work on its own merits.

Practice throwing techniques with a partner, under compliant conditions and without atemi. Building up to throwing without compliancy. Once you feel comfortable with this concept add semi-controlled atemi.

Defence/attack practice

One side practices defence whilst the other side practices attack, starting off with a little partner resistance and building up to full partner resistance.

All out vertical grappling

Vertical grappling with no partner compliancy, anything vertical goes right through to throwing to the ground position. When the fight hits the floor stop and start again. Do not, at this stage fight on the floor.

Animal Day

Ground Work

Light free fighting

Starting from a kneeling position fight off, very lightly, and have a good feel of ground fighting. No pressure is intended here so enjoy it, don't let it progress to anything heavy. In light free fighting you and your partner should both be looking for an opening for pins, hold downs, escapes etc. No atemi at this stage. This exercise is purely for feeling and getting sensitised with the distance.

Pins and hold downs

Practice pinning or holding down your opponent, initially with a little partner resistance and progressing to full partner resistance. Start by choosing a specific technique, hold your partner down with it and then let him try and break the hold with you trying to keep him pinned. At the beginning stage do not use any atemi but gradually build up to its inclusion.

Escapes
Practice escape techniques from a pinned position. Start with a little partner resistance and no atemi building up to full partner resistance and include atemi.

All-out ground fighting
Anything goes, on the ground. Fighting with full partner resistance until submission. The only restriction that the fight stays on the floor, no standing at this stage..

All-out light grappling
Anything goes from vertical to ground fighting with the restriction of control. To start and build familiarity, go light.

All-out heavy grappling
All-out, anything goes with the range of grappling. No atemi should be used outside of grappling range, restrict yourself to working only within the pin-submission rules.

Whilst the former (and the forthcoming) will help you build up to Animal Day it is also an excellent method of dissecting and practising the separate aspects of each distance, it is the way I still practice now, in between Animal Days. It will develop a comprehensive appreciation of every distance and also allow you to perfect and develop new techniques. The best way to learn a distance correctly is to isolate it from the other distances and practice every aspect, then bring it back into the full curriculum.

Chapter Seven

Punching

Punching is the main artillery range so I spend more time on the punching arts than I do any other distance, it is certainly the most important range when it comes to a real fight.

Again we will isolate the different aspects of punching so as to perfect each and also to pyramid the intensity up to full contact boxing.

Note:
If the puncher gets close enough it would be a natural extension to use the elbows as opposed to the fists. Certainly in the unrestricted sections it is viable to try and employ the elbows in with the hands if and when possible.

Punch isolation (on the bag)
Each punch should be isolated and practised on its own, this can be worked in sparring or on the bag/pads etc. To start with, use a training implement like the bag or pads and work three 2 minute rounds just on that one punch. Starting with the jab, then the cross (right or left depending upon your stance) left hook, right hook, left uppercut, right uppercut. It is important here that you do restrict your practice to one punch, don't be tempted to throw a cross if you are practising a jab etc.

Punch isolation (in light-heavy sparring)
Exactly the same as above but with a partner. This is called restricted sparring (use boxing gloves), restricted to only one punch, i.e. jab or cross etc. You may use either side to defend. Keep it light and enjoy it, at this level you should be learning to use the different

punches against a partner who is doing the same. Because you are both going light and there is no danger of being hurt you will feel more comfortable trying out new moves, if you spar too heavy too soon the learning process will be greatly impeded, you will be very unlikely to try out anything new if you know that you will get hurt should it fail.

Progress to heavy restricted sparring.

One side restricted sparring

Right cross against opponent

Animal Day

This time you are restricted to attacking with only one side of the body, though you may defend with both sides. The restriction may be left hand attacks only or right hand attacks only, you can also have one side attacking only left side whilst the other attacks only right, or vice-versa, or both sides using only right side or both partners using only left side. Be sure to agree on the restriction before commencing the fight to avoid confusion.

Defence/attack only

One side defending whilst the other side attacks, starting light with no restrictions on what technique you use (as long as it is a punching technique), then swap around so that the attacker defends and the defender attacks. Build up, very gradually until the attacks are full contact. Again, it is important not to break your restriction, if you are defending make sure that you do not counter attack. Restrict yourself purely to blocking or evasion.

Light hand sparring

Sparring with no technique restriction but with a strict restriction on control, start of very lightly.

All-out hand sparring

Anything goes hand sparring with no restriction on technique or control. Do not let it progress into kicking or grappling. Hands only. You can use any technique, it is not restricted to boxing punches, if you want to attempt say a spinning back-fist etc. feel free.

As with the grappling the former exercises are a good way of training for excellence in hands, isolate each aspect and polish it before replacing it into the curriculum.

Chapter Eight

Kicking

Although kicking is the weakest of the main artillery ranges it is still important, it cannot be slighted. It is especially effective when attacking/finishing a felled opponent or kicking a second/third opponent when/if your hands are tied up in grappling the first opponent. If kicks are to be employed they should be ferocious, accurate and powerful, there is no sense in throwing a kick, or any technique for that matter, that does not damage the adversary. Again this means training for contact and not for points. If the foot is taken off the floor and employed as an attack it should do the damage and then be replaced to the floor again as quickly as possible. The most vulnerable targets, attacking a vertical opponent, are the lower abdomen, pubic bone, genitals, thighs, knees and shins (ankles and feet if using stamping kicks). Anything above the waist is less vulnerable and dangerous to the kicker.

I will break the kicking down it to separate fragments.

Isolated kicking on the bag/pads

As with the punching it is necessary to isolate the kicking technique in order to perfect it. Front kick, side kick, round house, back kick etc. should be practised on the bags/pads/strike shield individually for three two minute rounds aiming for power, speed and accuracy. Make sure that you don't get into the habit of leaving the kicking leg out to long or pivoting on the support leg after connection with the target. Power and speed will not just come on its own, if you want to kick faster or harder you must try to kick faster and harder. Practice the kicks at different ranges.

All-out kicking (on the bag/pads)
Any kick on the bag/pads/kick shield etc. Go for power and fast retraction, vary the distance.

Isolated kicking: with a partner

The same as above, only now sparring with a partner. Which ever kick you choose be it front kick or round house etc, use both legs and spar with your partner who is doing the same. Start off light and build up until you are using full contact kicks. You may also mix and match the techniques, for instance you attack only front kick and you partner only side kick, or you attack round house whilst your partner attacks front kick etc.

All-out kicking (with a partner)
Kick sparring with no restrictions on technique or power. Start off light and gently build up to full contact.

If you want to develop excellent kicking technique isolate each kick and work it to distraction, then join it back in with the other techniques.

Chapter Nine

Weapons Fighting

Weapons fighting is a very specialised area, I have been faced with weapons on the pavement on a few occasions, I have been glassed three times, attacked with bottles, threatened with guns etc (and that's just by my ex-wife). Being faced by a weapon in the controlled arena is worlds apart from facing a thug with a knife in the REAL arena. Most of the knife defence systems that I have witnessed simply wouldn't work in the real world.

From my experience with knives a stabber never shows and a shower never stabs. If someone really wants to stab you he will not show the blade and if he only wants to scare you he will show the blade. Knife attacks are usually ferocious, frenzied and fired under the veil of mass deception. In this chapter all I want to highlight is the reality of knife attack by weapon-sparring with absolutely no partner compliancy. Use old clothes and a marker pen (if you are caught the pen will mark your clothes and show you where you have been hit). With the edged blade being the most dangerous of the weapons (probably even more so than the gun) we will restrict this chapter to use of the blade, I would, however, recommend that you spar with other simulated weapons to gain familiarity and gain a little realism.

Note:
Be sure not to fall into compliancy here, it will be easy to allow your partner to use techniques from your (or his) own system out of habit, or because you don't want to offend him by highlighting the weaknesses in his system or technique. There will be no room for that here.

Weapon attack sparring

One opponent defending, the other attacking with a marker pen. The attacker should try to catch the opponent as many times as he can within three minutes, using any technique and with no restriction on control. At the end of the three minutes change around so that the defender attacks and the attacker defends. At the end of the three minutes count the marks on eachother's clothes and body to see who was the most successful in defence and attack.

Don't cheat yourself or your partner by throwing halfhearted attacks or by being a compliant opponent, in defence or attack. Mark your partner as many times during the three minutes as you can.

Weapons contest sparring

Face your partner with your marker pens at the ready and fight with no restrictions on technique or control. Fight three three-minute rounds with 30 seconds rest in between. At the end of the three rounds count the amount of pen marks on eachother's body and clothes, the one carrying the most marks is the loser.

None of this is worth practising unless there is intent in the attacker, make your attacks committed and ferocious, even frenzied. Compliancy will not highlight weakness so do not be compliant.

This practice is an excellent acid test of whether your knife/weapons defence is or is not sound. If it is an effective system it will work here, if it is not, it will not. A system that only works under certain conditions or certain rules will crumble badly under the pressure of the real deal. So if it does not work here, under manufactured pressure, don't kid yourself that it will work outside. Re-evaluate the system that you are learning and make any changes that need making.

Chapter Ten

Combining Distances

In this chapter, the penultimate before Animal Day, we will combine distances. This is the last preparatory step before going all-out, it is also an excellent way of forcing practitioners to fight at a distance they do not like or understand. This is often necessary when dealing with people who avoid certain distances.

Many practitioners of a given distance lose against other fighters of different distances simply because they are ignorant to that distance. This chapter will force everyone at any distance to learn defence and attack against others at a foreign range. For instance, I would class punching distance as a more dangerous range than kicking, yet I have beaten many good boxers in the street with a kicking technique because they did not know how to defend against my kicks. Many grapplers are badly hurt as they close the gap with punchers because they have no defence in their system against a puncher.

The combinations here are endless and you can mix or match as you please. I shall list here a few that are practised at my own club.

Note:
All should be practiced lightly to start and then built up to full contact. When contact is unrestricted elbow attacks would be allowed.

Boxer

1) Boxer against a kicker

One person is restricted to the use of hand techniques whilst the other is restricted to the use of kicking techniques though both may defend without restriction. This will allow/force a weak puncher/kicker to punch or kick, it will also allow/force a strong kicker/puncher to test is skills against a kicker/puncher.

2) Boxer against a grappler

One person is restricted to the use of hand techniques, the other restricted to the use of grappling techniques allowing or forcing both to fight against an opponent of a different range.

3) Boxer against all-out

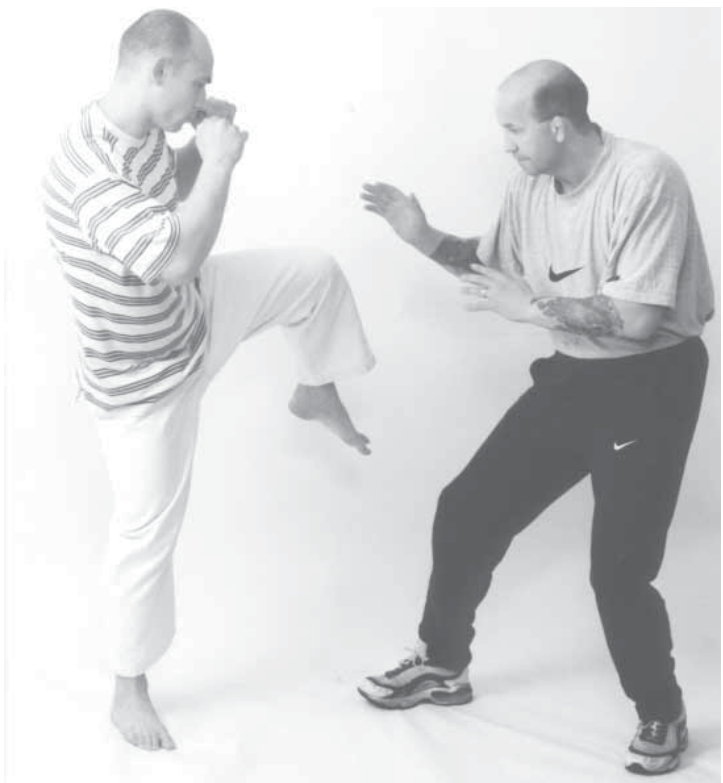
One person is restricted to hand techniques only whilst the other is completely unrestricted, allowing the boxer to test against all-out and the *all-out* to test against a boxer.

Kicker

1) Kicker against a boxer

Trying at all times to keep himself in kicking range and the boxer out of punching range.

2) Kicker against a grappler



Trying to keep the grappler at bay and not allowing him to get close enough to grab (a hard task).

3) Kicker against all-out
Trying to maintain kicking range and stop the all-out opponent at the same range.

Grappler

1) Grappler against boxer
The grappler has to get inside punching range and take the puncher to the floor.

2) Grappler against kicker
The grappler has to get inside kicking and punching range and take the kicker to the floor.

3) Grappler against all-out
The grappler has to get inside punching and kicking range and take the opponent to the floor.

This is the last step, now you should be ready to fight all-out against all-out, this being Animal Day.

Even when you get used to Animal Day you should still practice all the isolation and restriction exercises to perfect each element of each distance. Animal Day is not something that you need to do every session, perhaps once every two weeks or once every month.

All the exercises in the forgoing chapters can be spread over as long a period as you wish and certainly used as a regular training method. It involves contact at every level, initially the contact will probably be unnerving but in the long term you will get used to it and it will seem very ordinary. You can get used to anything if you do it often enough.

Chapter Eleven

Animal Day

Many people I speak to think that Animal Day is an extreme, I think it is just ordinary, but that's because I have been doing it for so long now, once you are used to it you will feel this way too. As well as perfecting technique and testing concepts Animal Day is a great mind builder: coping with mental adversity builds the mind like bar bell curls build the biceps. If you can do it and continue to do it you will become a very strong individual, this strength will overflow into your every day life and make you someone to be reckoned with (if you are not already). Eventually it will give you the confidence to transcend the physical and - as I said earlier – let people off. Ultimately you should be so good, so confident that you give the physical stuff the big heave-ho, you sack it and start looking for higher echelon ways to solve your problems. You also start looking for less transient means of building yourself up. Any physical ability is, at best, just a way to get you into cerebral arena, at worst it will enable you to protect you body until that time arrives. If you are still at the stage where you secretly long for an attack just so that you can prove your ability, then you have no ability at all; when you are scared to use your skills because they are so potent, then you are getting there. But that is a different book entirely.

The confidence gained from testing your physical/psychological wares is mostly due to your internal battles with the inner opponent. If you can control him in combat then you can certainly control him in your every day life where he wants to, and usually does, rule supreme. The adversity of standing up to yourself will give

you a greater appreciation of the finer things in life. People like Gandhi developed supreme internal power by fighting the inner opponent, and he never picked up a weight, never got on the mat, never punched the bag, he developed an indemonstrable spirit with the practice of abstainism; abstaining from certain food groups, fasting, abstaining from negative thought etc. He completely by-passed fighting (in fact he was a pacifist) and developed an iron will by fighting himself (or certainly by fighting his own addictions) on a daily basis. In the end he even gave up sex in his bid for better-dom (a bloke can go too far I think). But, again, that is another book too.

When I've run five miles and done 20-40 rounds on the bag believe me when I tell you that a cup of tea is a cup of tea, it tastes like nectar, your food tastes nicer, your wife sweeter your children more fun and life seems bliss. After adversity, Animal Day or a good training session, you feel as though you have earned every thing that you get, the strength of mind gained also helps you to cope a lot better with the stresses of life.

People think nothing of going to the toilet every day and getting rid of the physical waste of the day, but what about the mental waste that lies fermenting in our bodies and minds? The guy that cut you up in the car this morning, the boss at work that doesn't appreciate you, in fact he treats you like shit, your ex-wife/husband who still tries to dominate your life, all of the things in society that add to the psychological waste that we carry around and do not de-sludge. Training, Animal Day etc can be a mental de-sludge, a way to excrete all of the stresses of the day so that we do not come home from another bad day at work and take it out on our spouse or our children, the people close to us. So as well as all of the formerly mentioned benefits of a solid training routine we also get rid of unwanted psychological waste.

Animal Day

Animal Day should not be taken too lightly, it can be dangerous and I highly recommend that you use protective equipment, as I have said though in my other books (you should read them you know) if there was no risk there would be no point, you would only be getting some thing that everyone else can get, it needs to be hard so that only the elite few who are prepared to sacrifice, will achieve. Between those that dream and those that do is a cavernous hole called risk, only those that dare to step across that gap will achieve and those that do not will remain forever dreamers. Pain/fear is what keeps people ordinary, and there is nothing wrong with ordinary if that is what you want from life, if you want to be somebody then you have to take pain on board and learn to handle it.

I digress, Animal Day can be broken down into two parts: Timed and limitless.

Timed Animal Day

Time your rounds, this will give you a light at the end of the tunnel if things are feeling or getting a little ugly. Start with three 1 minute rounds and then build up to two minute rounds and then three minute rounds. Depending upon your fitness build up the number of rounds that you do, try to get up to 8-10 rounds, if you can't cope with that many stick at 3-5 rounds.

Limitless

In limitless Animal Day you fight until knock-out or submission, that's how it would be in a real fight (or certainly until there is a winner and a loser).

Even though you have now gone through all of the different ranges you will still have a favourite distance, everyone does, so when

you fight off it is your prerogative to stick at that range if you so desire (if you can).

Ultimately your goal should be to become competent/good/excellent at all ranges, this will allow you to take others that are not competent at each range to their weakest range. So in theory every fight that you have in the gym/dojo will be different, if your partner is a better grappler than you, you should try to avoid grappling and fight him at kicking and punching range, if he is a better puncher than you, you should be avoiding punching range and fighting him at kicking or grappling range, if he is a better kicker than you then avoid kicking range and fight him at punching or grappling range.

Similarly if he is better at two ranges than you, kicking and punching for instance, then you would be looking to fight him at, his weakest range, grappling etc.

If you face an opponent who is better than you at all three ranges then you should try to take him to the weakest part of any given range, for instance in boxing range you have good attacking fighters who are not very good defensively, so you would take the fight to him where he is weakest, in defence, or he might be a good close range puncher but a poor long range puncher, so fight him at long range.

Even on a psychological level you may take a fighter to a weak point, even if they best you at all physical ranges. For instance, I watched a British heavyweight kick-boxing champion sparring with a guy that was out punching and out kicking him (there was no grappling allowed due to full contact rulings) so the heavyweight champion added a little mental pressure by allowing a bit of anger

to show and by constantly moving into his opponents techniques as though they were not hurting him (even though they were). Within a about a minute and a half the British champion was all over his sparring partner because he was starting to bottle out. A combination of displayed anger, made the opponent believe that the fight was going to become real, and no show of pain or emotion, made the opponent believe that the attacker was either impervious to feeling or that his own techniques were not having any effect. So a better fighter was beaten on a mental level.

This of course happens all of the time in real situations on a street level, good fighters lose against bad fighters because their weakest link is mental as opposed to physical. I have used this psyching out process, in and out of the dojo, on many occasions, in fact I'd go as far as to say that I have won more fights with the use of psyche than I have with the use of force. If you look at the world of professional boxing you will see mass evidence of this. Pre-fight, in-fight and post-fight blurb. Intimidating the opponent at all levels and at all times before the fight, talking to him and beckoning him on during the fight (Ali was a master of in-fight blurb) and psyching the opponent out after the fight in preparation for a possible return fight (a classic of this is Nigel Benn and Chris Eubank). The pre-fight and post-fight also help to draw crowds to the fights. I will use Ali as a prime example, though the strategy can be worked on any level, in and out of combat, even sales men use the same kind of mind game to out gun possible rivals and even customers.

Pre-fight

Mohammed Ali was a master of intimidation before, during and after fights. As well as filling the stadium with fight fans and grossing three or four times more money than any other heavyweight fighter of the time Ali's prime reason for using pre-fight blurb was to, 1)

intimidate his opponent into thinking that he was unbeatable because of his blatant confidence, his words clicking off the opponents adrenalin and inner opponent, and thus using up valuable nervous energy. 2) Getting the opponent so angry that they use up masses of energy negatively before the fight so that when they reach the ring they have used up much of their fuel. 3) Getting the opponent so angry that he forgets his game plan because all he wants to do is teach this loud mouth a lesson that he won't forget.

In-fight

During the fight Ali would talk to his opponents and tell them what sissies they were and that their punches were weak and movement robotic and, 'hey, what the hell are you doing in the ring with a master like me? You're out of your league boy.' Again this would very often force anger, and thus wasted energy, in even the most experienced fighters, who would then abort their game plan to try and hurt Ali. A classic was the so-called *rope-a-dope* antics of the Ali/Foreman fight. Every round Ali would walk straight into the corner of the ring and lean his back on the ropes from where he would beckon Foreman on. For five rounds Foreman fell for the trap and tried with all his might to finish Ali. Ali took the best shots that Foreman could fire and then asked, whilst in the clinch, 'Is that the best you can do, you're a pussy, I thought you were supposed to be a hard hitter, my sister hits harder than that' etc.

Foreman forgot all of his well thought out game plans and went for the kill, after five rounds he was so mentally and physically exhausted that Ali knocked him out with what seemed like a glancing blow.

Post-fight

To rub salt into the wounds and enhance his unbeatable and fearless aura Ali would tell his opponents that next time it would be worse and that he'd rematch them *any time*. This would stick in the subconscious mind of the beaten opponent like a fish bone in the gullet.

Whenever I finished a *name* fighter I would always tell them, if they were conscious, (I'd tell their mates to tell them when they woke up if they were unconscious) that I would meet them for a return *any time, any place* and that next time I wouldn't take it so easy on them, after probably the beating of their lives that would leave them thinking, *he was taking it easy!*

When you are practising Animal Day don't worry if it gets scruffy, if you don't finish a fight in the street within the first couple of punches, scruffy is how it is going to get. As long as you are effective it does not matter how it looks, this is not a Kung-fu movie. Try and get a look at the fight scene at the end of the film *Lethal Weapon* where Mel Gibson fights the blond haired baddie (sorry I can't remember his name) that's how it gets when a fight has no restrictions. The ego takes a bit of a bashing when things stop looking aesthetic, but that is only because we have been conditioned by celluloid peer pressure to look clean and clinical against opponents that attack in order and fall theatrically to our counter-blows instead of hanging onto us like fighting parasites and *spoiling* our form (damn them). Real fighting, by nature is a scruffy affair, but once you understand and get a taste for it that scruffiness has an aesthetic look all of its own.

Don't give in: panic, pre-fight, in-fight and post-fight fear, exhaustion, nausea, pain and disorientation are all natural by-products of Animal

Day, do be unsettled by them, everyone, in varying degrees will feel them, what makes them more acceptable to the skeptical mind is the fact that they are all the same feelings that you will feel in a real confrontation and the only way you will ever get used to controlling them is by being exposed to them. Take heart, it does get better, the more you expose yourself to them the more desensitised you will get, so when the going gets tough, don't give in (or 'get going' as the song says).

It is usual at the start to want to give in very early on in the game, this again is usual so don't feel yourself a coward if you feel like, or even do, give in. The important thing is that each time you have an Animal Day you stretch that point more and more so that you learn to never give in.

Chokes, strangles and locks

Once these holds are firmly on there is little hope of escape, there is no point in letting your opponent take you to unconsciousness with a strangle rather than submit, neither is their a point in letting him break a limb because you are to stubborn to give in. If you can fight your way out of it, do so with as much vigour and cunning as possible and try to go as long as you can before *tapping out*, but if the hold is *on*, tap out and start again. If you are going to lose a fight the controlled environment is the place to do it, there should be no ego involved. There are certain elements that you will learn from losing that, unfortunately, can not be learned in any other way, so even losing holds its lessons and should be viewed under a positive light and not seen as the end of the world. If you are losing sleep because of one or two losses in the controlled arena then you have a problem with the ego, this has to be controlled or you will find the whole exercise becomes negative and learning will be slighted. When I first started boxing and wrestling I was losing a

hell of a lot more than I was winning, I found it a very humbling experience, you should too.

Persevere

Initially, if you are not used to Animal Day, everything that you have learned before may seem or be out of sync. The distancing, timing, control, speed, power, attitude, intent will all be different. The suite of techniques you have sewn together over your years of training may not quite fit the frame of Animal Day (and therefore street scenario). Don't throw the suit away because it is not of immediate fit, tailor what you have to fit your new environment.

Many people say, after training with me, that they feel as though they have wasted their formative years in whatever system they have been studying, they haven't, far from it, everyone needs a base system to learn the fundamentals of kick, punch, block, footwork etc, and these element vary very little from style to style (contrary to what some may think). The problem with base builders is, that's all they do, build bases, rather they should set a good solid base and then build upon it. My base was Shotokan, on top of that base I built a solid construction of boxing, wrestling, Judo, Thai, gung-fu, weapons, ju-jitsu, weight training etc. What have you built upon your base, besides more and more bases? Your base system may be Thai or it may be Judo, or Gung-fu or whatever, it doesn't matter, you need a base and your upper elevations should compliment that base. If my base is Judo/wrestling then I would compliment that with boxing and/or Thai. If my base was Tae-kwodo I would compliment it with boxing and wrestling. Whatever my base is lacking or weak on I will add. Have a good look at what you've got and if it doesn't fit or change and/or add to it so that it does. Change is sense not sacrilege.

Epilogue

I class Animal Day as forge training, and as with any kind of forge training you don't have to do it for ever. I don't do Animal Day training (in a physical sense) any more. When you place a blade in the forge you only do it until the blade is tempered, then you take it out and for the rest of its life you keep the blade sharp, you don't place it back into the forge again. Once you have tempered your own blade (only you will know when this is) pull away from the forge and just keep the blade sharp. Animal Day is not forever; it is a stepping-stone to the higher echelons. It is my hope that once you have mastered Animal Day you will let go of this obsession (we all have) with being able to fight and move onto the finer things that life has to offer. My life is so exciting, there are so many things that I want to (and will) do, and I have to tell you that punching someone in the eye with a practiced right is not one of them. I never want to get into a fight again in my life, and if I have any say in it at all I won't. We sell ourselves short if we allow violence to define us, I refuse to be defined by something so grotesque. I choose better, I hope that you might too.

Animal Day is not easy, and it never will be. What I ask, is that you remember one thing: *if it were easy, everyone would be good*. Expect it to be hard, learn to handle hard by facing it as a way of life. If you expect it, anything less will be a bonus.

I have not added extra curriculum to this text, but it goes without saying that weights and anaerobic training, as an additive, will help you in your endeavour to improve. I have written books on all of the fighting distances that will help you immeasurably, *Watch My Back, Bouncer* and *On The Door* will show you the brutal reality of

how it is on the pavement arena, my training books, *The Pavement Arena*, *Real Punching*, *Real Grappling*, *Real Kicking, Head, Knees & Elbows* and *Dead or Alive* will guide you to technical perfection and add a myriad of techniques to your curriculum. My book *Weight training - for the martial artist* will help develop the muscular strength and density to cope with the physical trauma of *all-out* and *Fear - the friend of exceptional people* will help you to understand, come to terms with and subsequently control fear. Besides that it is my recommendation that you devour as much data on the different fighting systems of the world as you can, make it, like I have, your life. Train with as many people and in as many systems as you can and experience the varying tastes of world martial arts. More than that, if you haven't already, take off the blinkers and see the world of combat in its true light, it is as ugly as it is immediate. If you are not attacking you'll be getting hit, if you're not first you'll be second and in the world of real, second place is last. With an enemy so brutal as the one we are now facing, last can mean DEAD!

Thank you for taking the time to read my book, I hope it has been of use. May your God bless you.

THE FENCE

THE ART OF PROTECTION

GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

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He has published several articles for GQ magazine, and has also been featured in FHM, Maxim, Arena, Front and Loaded magazines, and has been featured many times on mainstream TV.

Geoff is currently a contributing editor for Men's Fitness magazine and self defence columnist for Front.

Other books and videos by Geoff Thompson

Watch My Back – A Bouncer's Story
Bouncer (sequel to *Watch My Back*)
On the Door – *Further Bouncer Adventures*.
The Pavement Arena – *Adapting Combat Martial Arts to the Street*
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The Fence

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– Grappling, The Last Resort
Pavement Arena Part 4
– Fit To Fight

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Introduction

I worked the doors in Coventry for over nine years, and in that time encountered just about every malevolent, un-sentient being you can imagine. Their one goal in life – at least it appeared – was to make a hole in the ground with my head. This wouldn't be so bad if the very same people didn't want to hug and kiss me to oblivion every Christmas and New Year. I'm labouring the point, what I'm trying to say is that, after nine years of dealing with shit, I learned the best way to shovel. Without doubt my greatest physical development in all those years of neutralising violence was 'the fence'. I can't really say that I invented the fence because many people were, and are, already inadvertently using it successfully. What I can say is that I brought it to the forefront and categorised it.

Recognising the potency of this devastating, yet simple, technique, I developed it into an art form, so that many others who perhaps have less experience in the world of brutality might adopt it as a life-saving technique for the contemporary world of 'in your face' violence. I have to say that, conceptually, the fence is simple and anyone, irrespective of their skill level, can adopt it.

In most aspects of our life where a problem might present itself, simplicity is usually the answer, but often

it is grossly overlooked because of its modest demeanour. The fence is no different; it is so real and so obvious that only the enlightened few seem to be able to see it. Many, it would appear, are looking up their own backsides for some mystical, complex, aesthetic dance routine that might devastate several opponents with a flick or a trip, and – at the same time – endear them to their peers. To the latter I would say 'stick to the kung fu movies because that's the only place it'll work.'

Sir Winston Churchill once said that many people stumble upon the truth and then get back up and wander off as though nothing had happened. And that's generally because the truth is often too simple – or it hurts – or it might mean too many changes. In short the truth is not palatable, it strikes at the heart of lost souls and forces them, momentarily, to see just how far astray they are. At face value the fence looks so simple that many people fail to see it's potency. It's not pretty enough to go into the curriculum of the majority who collect techniques like football cards. I don't collect ornaments to be displayed, I collect rocks that can be thrown at malevolents who wish to enter my world.

So, from the off, please try to look below the surface of the fence and take the word of a man that has used it very successfully in thousands of threatening and potentially threatening situations. This is the real

deal – it's the tread on a fast tyre, the control before the power. The fence is where I spend most of my time when I train for reality. And as you'll see, as and when you begin to train in the fence, it is not quite as easy to put into practice as it looks.

The main reason why the fence will probably be the most important physical technique that you will learn is its controlling factor in a live scenario. As we should all know, control comes before power. Being the best puncher in the world, or the fastest kicker is of little use if you do not possess that pivotal ingredient 'control'.

To save any confusion I think I should reverse up and talk a little about the common misconceptions about street violence and how to train for it. Most people's idea of self-defence is either a match fight where two fighters 'have it' on the common, or they think it's the old 'block-counter' scenario. Not so I'm afraid, in both cases. So what kind of fighting do you train for? What kind of enemy are you preparing to fight? What are his weaknesses and his strengths? What are his limitations? Where is his layer? One thing is for sure you are very unlikely to meet up with anyone that throws attacks at you like they do in you martial arts class, that's why many of the techniques you develop in the controlled arena fail to work outside.

From my perspective, as an empiricist, I see combat as falling into 4 categories. I see basic self-defence/ protection as being primarily about avoidance, escape, verbal dissuasion and, if all else has fails, a pre-emptive attack on your assailant – then run for your life. No hanging around to 'finish the opponent off', as is so often taught in unlikely self-defence classes all around the world. Hit and run – no more, no less. Then we have match fighting, which, as I explained earlier, is the scenario where we have an arranged fight on the common (very honourable but from a bygone age). When was the last time you saw two men with enough bottle to have a square go? It hardly ever happens. In the UFC (Ultimate Fight Competition) and other extreme fighting contests we see expert match fighters battling it out to discover who, and what style is potentate. But as honourable as this type of fighting may be we mustn't mistake it for street defence in this era. Then there is ambush fighting. Basically if you are switched off to the environment and to the contemporary enemy every fight/situation that you find yourself involved in will be a veritable ambush fight. Last, but not by any mean least we have the most contemporary fighting arena of the day. Three second fighting is where it is at, right now, on this ever-spinning planet that we inhabit.

Three second fighting is so called because most real fights do not go beyond three seconds in today's arena. It is cutting edge fighting where honour,

unfortunately, has no place and the attackers leading technique is dialogue, using deception and distraction to secure destruction. The majority of fights in our age are either ambush fights, because most victims are switched off most of the time or three second fights, which start with some kind of dialogue. Of course we would be silly not to prepare for all types of fighting but we would be sillier still if we, like so many present day martial artists, prepare for none at all and just hope that our sparring practice will adequately prepare us.

At the risk of offending people out there (something that I don't want to do but inadvertently seem to anyway), I say 'WAKE UP!' If it's real combat you want then drop the flowers and start picking up the rocks. And please, whatever you do, don't take my word for any of this. Just pick up the newspapers, watch the TV news, open you eyes next time it kicks off in the club, the pub, outside the chippy and ask yourself one question 'will what I train in – my art – fit into that?' If it won't – or even if there is a little doubt – why won't it and why aren't you changing your art right now so that it does?

If you are outside the chippy with your lady or your kids and it kicks off, will your art, or more specifically the way that you train your art, stand up to the rigours of such naked aggression, when two ugly youths are

in your face and screaming 'HAVE YOU GOT A ****ING PROBLEM WITH ME?!'

Forget the honour, the touch of gloves, the bows, the whistles and the etiquette. Forget what works in sparring or on the bag or even in the ring – they are different arenas. I don't care how big you are or how hard you hit – if you can't cope with that three seconds before it 'kicks off' and the consequences of what that fight entails – comebacks, police involvement, killing, being killed, threats to your life, your family etc – then all the talent in the world isn't going to help you. If you don't understand the contemporary enemy and that, in his world, deception is fair play, he is going to take you out of the game before you even realise that you are in it. And you can complain as much as you like about how unfair it all is and that you wouldn't have lost if he hadn't have hit you when you weren't looking but none of it will mean shit because you still lost and he still won. And losing in this environment does not mean a second place trophy, it may mean a hospital bed, or even your own slab at the city morgue. If you doubt me have a look in today's papers, or yesterday's or even tomorrow's and you will see written proof that death is a usual consequence of 'coming in second'. Sun Tzu had it right 25 centuries ago, understand the enemy, understand yourself, one hundred battles without fear of defeat.

The Fence

I have fought many skilled fighters in the street, some with better credentials than myself, others with over 20 years of martial spontaneity built into their brains. The majority I beat with a single technique. How? I switched off their spontaneity, I closed down their 20 years of experience, I made them novices again by taking them outside their own arena and using dialogue as my entry, deception as my 'trap' and a practised right hook as my coup de grace. I might feign cowardice by allowing them a peep at my fear, this feeds their confidence until it is fat and overripe. I'll ask them a question to engage their brain, creating a window of entry for my physical technique, then it is over before it has really begun.

I know that this would not work in the match fight arena against the fighters from the UFC etc. But hey, I can live with that because it is not the arena that I am threatened with in society. It is an arena that one only ever enters by choice, I don't need to prepare for that, I need to prepare for the arena that is forced upon me – the pavement arena. In the extreme fighting you develop match fighting skills to defeat other martial artists, outside it is, as they say, a horse of a completely different colour.

In the match fighting arena the grapplers generally win over. I admire them greatly, I train in grappling, but do I really want to be grappling outside a bar? I don't think so. Many of my friends have made this

mistake and been hurt, one killed, for their blunder. Two of my friends were stabbed by women whilst they grappled on the floor with men. If you have ever faced more than one opponent in a street situation then you will know that grappling is the very last place you want to go. My intention here is not to be disrespectful to the grappling or martial arts fraternity, and if anyone is offended there is no need to write in and say so, because I offer my apology here and now. I know that training in all ranges is pivotal if you want to be a complete and rounded martial artist. But as a man who has 'had it' in the street more times that I care to remember, I owe it to the reader to be completely honest and tell it as I see it. What kind of a teacher, or man would I be if I wasn't honest.

For a lot of people 3second fighting still hasn't sunk in. This is absolutely scandalous because we all secretly know that this is where it's at. Maybe we're not all ready to hear it yet on a conscious level, but it's true and it's about time we all got ready for it. Three second fighting should be taught to every self-respecting martial artist on the planet – it should be pivotal on every curriculum.

Three second fighting is where dialogue is used to attack and prime – and very often defeat – an attacker, and where the concept of defence (the block/counter variety) is about as useful as a castor sugar jet ski. If you don't attack first in this arena, and I mean in a

hurry, you will get attacked and attacked and attacked, and if your wife or your mother or your child dares to try and stop the frenzied assault they'll got some too. Forget the films! This is real life! If you're not first then you're second, and on the pavement arena second is a very sorry last.

Of course, if you survive you can go to the police in the aftermath, but all that'll do is add another year of intense, ulcer-inducing, sleep-destroying, life-sapping worry to the physical scars that you already carry. Your life will go on hold for this length of time. Many find that they have to move to a different district because the scum that they are taking to court do not take kindly to being informed upon. I am not saying don't go to the police, I am simply saying don't expect them to solve all your problems because I doubt that they will.

A skirmish outside the chippy, if you do not assume control and take these people out of their league may, and probably will, change the course of your life – especially if you are not used to dealing in the currency that we so flippantly refer to as violence. This is where the fence comes into its own, in that it allows you to control a situation in the early stages of dialogue. If you find yourself unable to talk your way out of a situation the fence also allows you to attack from your controlling stance and destroy every threat in you path.

Again I should regress here and tell you that my own personal belief is that you should walk away from violence whenever and however you can. Most situations can be avoided if you have a small ego and a big awareness. Those that cannot be avoided can usually be escaped, again only if you have the control of your ego. Dissuasion is very good for talking down those situations that have not been avoided or escaped but you may have to 'appear' to swallow your pride a little for this to be completely effective. If you are very confident with your art and its workability in the street you will be able to walk away with confidence knowing that you are letting the other fellow off. If however you are not so confident all the more reason to swallow and walk away, if the other fellow will allow you to.

Of course, we are living in a callous society that does not look kindly on those that walk away from confrontations; the enemy is often cruel and despotic and seems to enjoy attacking for little or no reason. We are then placed in a position where, with the best will and intention in the world, we will not be able to walk away, we either attack or get attacked, whether we be the hammer or the anvil.

That's where this text will come into its own, in that it will prepare you for this pivotal moment so that you can defend yourself and your loved ones without even dropping your chips.

The Fence

Depending upon when you read this text, it is now July of the year 1998, it too may already be antiquated, a new environment and a new enemy may already have forced yet another paradigm shift in the art of defence (no doubt many will still have not changed from the first time around?!). If a change has occurred, then your duty to yourself and those that you wish to protect is to take this metaphoric, old piece of cloth and re-tailor it so that it fits. Nothing is lost, nothing is a wasted – some things just don't fit the way they should and many of the martial arts fashion victims of the 1990s refuse to get vogue, even though it may save their lives.

So many people are fighting ghosts, samurai on horseback, enemies that have died decades before. We should take the advice of the great poet William Blake and 'drive our cart and our plow over the bones of the dead.' In other words let's take our lessons from the past, but be sure not to carry their bones on our backs like an ever ladening burden. Take the techniques from this text and please make them your own. The way they are set out in this book is the way that suits me and some of the experienced fighters that I have known. However we are not you, and we are all intrinsically different so you should alter the techniques herein so that they fit you as a person. Cloning should be outlawed in the martial arts and all of our arts should look a little different if they are

going to work for us as individuals in this multi-faceted, ever evolving society.

Have fun with the book and the techniques and above all be a nice person – karma is always kinder to nice people.

Chapter One

The Premise

In this book we are working on the premise that, if a street confrontation occurs, you have already exhausted all other options, i.e. avoidance, escape, verbal dissuasion, loopholing and posturing. Most self-defence situations and attack scenarios issue rays of prior warning, if you are perceptive enough to spot the attackers ritual. If you are foolhardy enough to heighten your vulnerability by placing yourself in a dangerous situation (walking down a dark alley at night etc) you cannot expect any prior warning and will have to make the best of a bad situation. You then fall into the 'ambush attack' scenario. Most people in society are so switched off, both mentally and environmentally, that many attack scenarios fall into this category. If this is the case – and it so often is – then you will be fighting tooth and nail for your very existence. The majority will not survive the ambush attack purely because they have never trained for it.

Previously I talked about the verbal communication that often precedes an attack upon the person and the victim who is quite often disarmed or shocked rigid by it, The time lapse between the disarming, or scarifying verbal (which can be very short) and the attack itself is 'your time'. During these seconds you

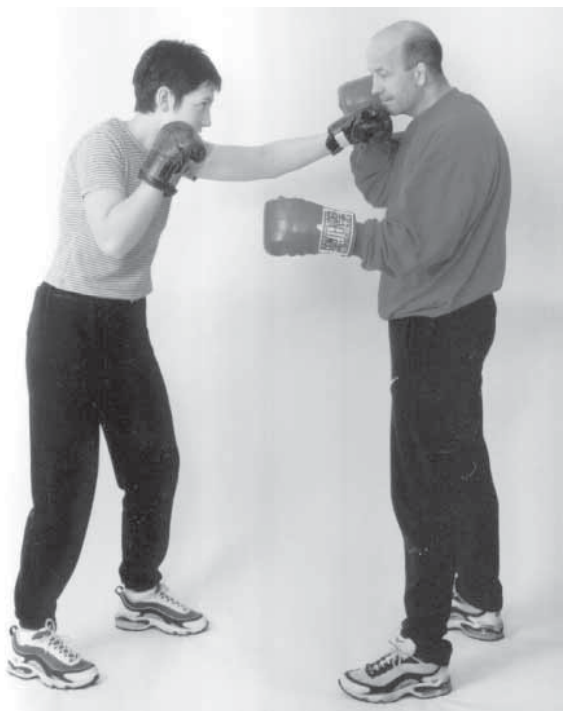
may 'seize the moment', as it were, and be pre-emptive, effecting attack or/and escape. Alternatively you can elongate the verbal by replying to the aforementioned dialogue with submissive or aggressive counter-verbal. These seconds before battle are absolutely pivotal. They must be managed quickly and without demur; remember, hesitancy begets defeat. This arena is that of the 3 second fighter.

When the police talk about self-protection the key word is 'target hardening' that is, making yourself a hard target by means of placement and awareness of environment and the enemy. When I talk about the physical aspect of self-protection I am always working on the premise that, for whatever reason, a situation has gone beyond this and reached dire straits and the possibility of escape is no longer an option.

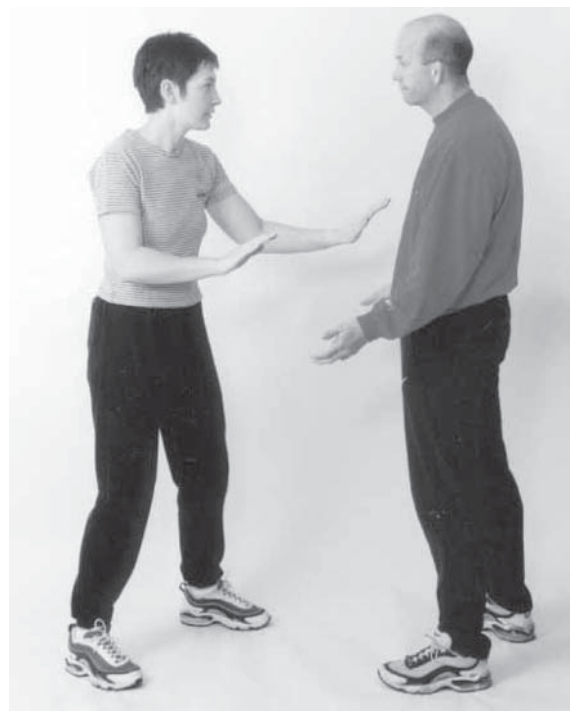
As I have just said pre-fight management is vital if you want to survive intact, the winner and loser in most situations is usually determined by what happens pre-fight as opposed to in-fight. Most situations start at conversation range, this being talking or hand shake distance, if this is mismanaged it degenerates very quickly to vertical grappling range and then ground fighting – not a good place to be if you don't know the arena or are facing more than one opponent. Whilst we can't really choose the range we want to fight at in the street, it is usually thrust upon us, we can maintain it so that it doesn't degenerate further

into grappling range by 'putting a fence around our factory'.

If you had a factory that you wanted to protect from robbers, the most sensible thing to do would be to place a fence around it, to make it a hard target. A potential robber has then got to get past that fence before he can even think about attacking the factory. Whilst the fence might not keep him out indefinitely it will make his job decidedly harder. This is rather like a boxer who constantly flicks a jab in front of his opponent's face. Even if that jab does not hit his opponent, it still keeps him at bay, and if his opponent wants to employ his knock out blow, he first has to find away past his opponent's jab. To the boxer the jab is the fence around his factory.



In self-protection the fence around your factory is your lead hand, placed in that all-important space between you and your antagonist to maintain a safe gap. Like the factory fence the lead hand will not keep an aggressor at bay forever – just long enough for you to initiate an escape or a pre-emptive attack – but it will place you in charge, even though your aggressor may not know it. Placed correctly, the lead hand and reverse hand will not only maintain a safe gap, but it will also disable the attackers armoury – right and left hand techniques/ head butt etc (though he may not know it on a conscious level, he will instinctively realise that until that fence has been removed or by-passed, his techniques have no clear way through).



Sensory tentacle

The lead hand acts as a sensory tentacle (be very careful how you say this when you've had a few drinks, it could get you a slap across the face from the barmaid!) to your aggressor's intentions and should be held in a non-aggressive way. It should not touch the aggressor unless he makes a forward movement and tries to bridge the gap between you and he. If he does move forward he will touch the fence and set your alarm bells ringing – this forward movement should be checked so as to maintain the safe range by using the palm of the lead hand on the aggressor's chest. Don't hold the touch as this may be seen by your assailant, on a conscious level, as a controlling movement (whilst of course it is a controlling action, it's better at this stage that the aggressor does not feel that you are in control), which may create a power play and force him to knock your hand away or grab your wrist or even cause him to attack you prematurely. As soon as you have checked him, return the lead hand to its stand-by position.

One of the final precursors to an aggressor's attack is distance close down. If the antagonist tries to bridge the gap that you are maintaining, it is usually because he is making his final preparations for assault. So, if he moves forward and touches the fence you should, as well as checking range, be getting ready to attack pre-emptively or posture – or suffer the consequences should he break down the fence. In my opinion, the

maximum number of times that a potential attacker should be allowed to touch the 'fence' is twice – after that you've got big problems and will probably end up in a match fight situation or on the floor with a crowd around you, depending up on the calibre of fighter you are facing. Every time the attacker touches the fence the danger doubles.

The 'fence' should look and feel natural, this will come with practice. If it doesn't appear natural and the attacker notices it on a conscious level, he will try to knock it away and bridge the gap – ideally the 'fence' should look like you are using your hands to talk ('talking hands' as my friend Maurice (Mo) Teague calls it).

A professional may notice the 'fence' no matter how well you disguise it and try using deceptive dialogue or body language to bring the 'fence' down – once he succeeds he will act. This often entails telling you that he does not want trouble, or that he just wants to talk, he may ask you for directions, ask the time, ask your name, anything to disarm you enough to lower the fence. An experienced fighter will offer to shake hands to get rid of the fence or try to close the gap by putting his arm around your shoulder in a pally kind of way – don't have any of it. If there is the slightest chance of threat then don't let anyone touch you – a good fighter will only need one shot once the fence is down, so keep it up.

If he still persists in coming forward and you don't feel ready to strike, or indeed are not even sure that a strike is called for, don't hesitate to back up the 'check' with a firm verbal fence, 'Just stay where you are.'

With the modern enemy the rule of thumb is 'if his lips are moving he's lying' so don't believe a word that he says. If he still persists in coming forward then he has given you the 'go'. Having said all that, if the potential attacker has already made his intentions obvious by asking you for your wallet or threatening you then there is nothing to contemplate, you should 'go' the first time the touches the 'fence'.

Range finder

The fence also acts as a range finder. Many trained fighters misjudge the distance of their attacks in a real situation because the range is foreign to them. By touching the opponent with the lead hand before initiating your attack you can judge the correct striking distance, enabling you a more accurate and solid shot.

Action trigger

If and when you decide to initiate an attack, the lead hand also acts as a physical action trigger, you touch the opponent with the lead hand – find the range – and bounce off the touch using it to trigger your attack. This movement should be coupled with the verbal brain-engaging action trigger.

Multiple attackers

The 'fence' can also be used to maintain the range and even position of multiple attackers. However, because this is tantamount to fighting on more than one front, and it is very difficult to maintain the range of more than one attacker, a speedy decision to attack or escape should always be sought.

The fence can be constructed in any way you choose, as long as it blocks the gap between you and your adversary and looks inoffensive. You can use a 'stop fence' by placing the palm of the lead hand in front of the opponent, but this will bring the control to a conscious level and may catalyse alarm in your opponent – where possible it is best to control him without him knowing it.

Chapter Two

The Fence

The Pleading Fence (PF)

This is a nice fence because it is submissive and inoffensive but it blocks range brilliantly, it also leaves the fingers ideally placed for an eye attack should it be needed. It is often best to underline the fence with firm, but submissive dissuasive dialogue, 'look, just keep away from me, I don't want trouble' or a more assertive 'stay where you are – don't come any closer.'

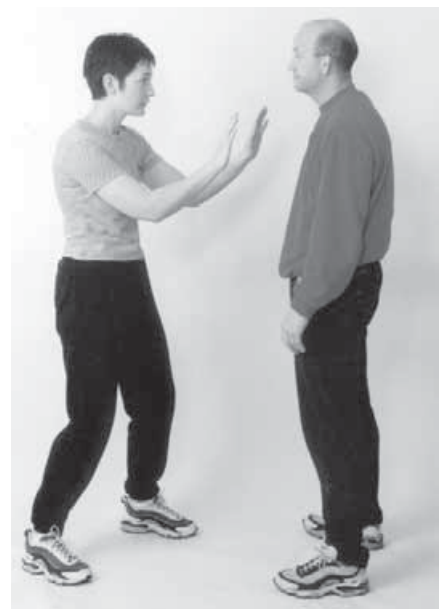
Being submissive is ideal if you have decided that you are going to employ a pre-emptive attack or you are using the deception to escape, it will mentally disarm your opponent. However, this approach does have a down side: many attackers will see it as a meal ticket to an easy victim and this may spur on their assault. This reaction is OK if you are setting the trap, but not so good if you are not expecting it. Personally I use the submissive approach quite a lot because it really does disarm the opponent and give you a clear line for the sniper option attack, whereas at other times I will use an assertive, even aggression fence, to psyche out the opponent.

Assertiveness can be both a good and a bad thing. If your attacker thinks that you are confident, it may

cause him to abort his intended attack – after all 'when ignorance is mutual, confidence is king'. However, if he is committed to attacking you no matter what, your assertiveness may trigger his aggression and you may lose the element of surprise and provide him with added adrenal turbo.

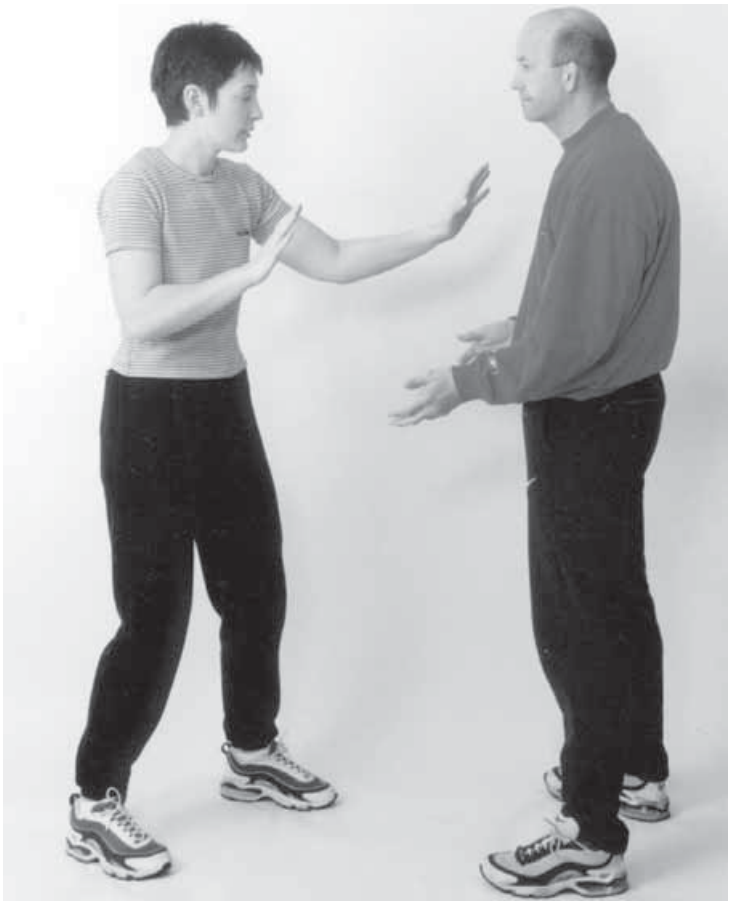
Having spent a lot of time working with and controlling violent people, I have learned to judge the right time for assertiveness and the right time for submissiveness. Not everyone will be able to do this, so, if you have a choice, use submissiveness to disarm and then attack and run, or use firm (but not aggressive) or submissive verbal dissuasion.

Both hands are placed in front of you, palms facing the attacker and several inches away from him but not touching.



The Staggered Fence (SF)

Similar to the PF with palms facing forward, but with the hands staggered by about one foot. The hand at the back would be the ideal one to use in attack, though with practice the lead hand would be ideally placed for a finger strike to the eyes.



The Exclamation Fence (EF)

The hands, palms upward, are held as though in exclamation, the lead left hand pushed forward as fence and the right hand, cocked to strike, to your own right hand side (left if reversed).

The Verbal Fence

The verbal fence is an excellent tool if you can see menace on its way in and works well pre-fight, in-fight and post-fight – I have used it successfully many times. This extract below from my book Bouncer exemplifies a post-fight fence rather well. The fight with the 'karate kid' had been on the cards for several months, I'd tried to avoid it but was unable. I pick up the situation as it reached its conclusion – the post-fight fence comes in at the end of the fight when one of his friends becomes involved (this was a match fight by the way).

'I'd spent two months trying to avoid this situation and was fed up with trying, I had no more chances left in my 'chance bag'.

The Fence

As the karate kid got closer his face began to grimace and I sensed he was going to strike at any moment. 'BANG!' Almost in slow motion, I hooked my right fist onto his advancing jaw, pushing it backwards, shaking his grey matter into the realms of unconsciousness. As he fell I volleyed his face and he spiralled, like movie strobe. I kicked him so hard that it hurt my foot. I felt hate leaving my body; he landed face down and forlorn on the cruel, black tarmac of defeat. Many people were watching, so I thought I'd give them a display, not for exhibitionism, nor fun, nor ego, I just wanted to take out a little insurance. Making the onlookers (mostly his mates) think that I was an animal would, in the future, insure that they did not tangle with me. It's what the Chinese call 'killing a chicken to train a monkey'

'Kiaaa,' I screamed as I brought an axe kick onto the body of my sleeping quarry. To the onlooker, it probably looked barbaric (which is how I wanted it to look), but in reality the kick was empty, I pulled it on impact, just as I had a thousand times in training. The man with the weasel face (the karate kid's mate) ran at me, from the crowd of onlookers, with ill intent and I stopped him in his tracks with a lash of my tongue (the verbal fence).

'GER OUT 'F MY ****ING FACE BEFORE I DESTROY YA!'

I pointed at him to underline my resolve. He stopped like an insect on fly paper.'

Unlike the varying genres of physical fence the verbal fence is best aggressive – the more so the better. It needs to pierce the opponent's sub-conscious and register danger with the brain – thus causing an adrenal reaction in him that he will hopefully mistake for fear.

In America they have a saying in the prisons, 'Give me five feet', meaning, 'keep at least five feet away from me' – 5 feet being the distance that they feel they are relatively safe at. This only works if you are perceptive enough to spot menace at a very early stage. More often than not a fight will arise from an argument or some kind of aggressive verbal so the 5 feet rule is already lost and the physical fence comes into play.

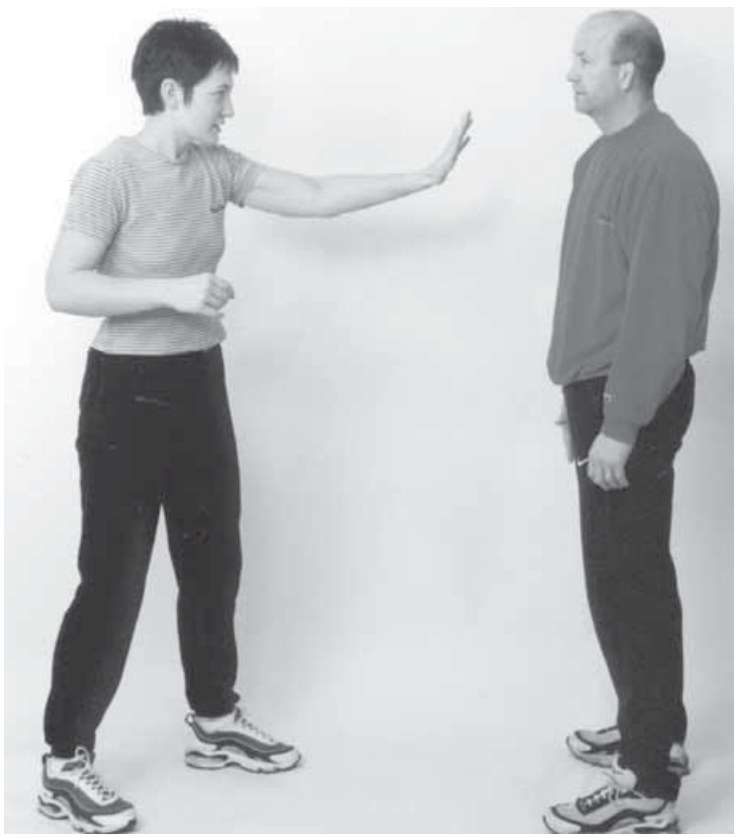
If you are using the verbal fence you must, as I have said, be very firm, even aggressive;

'Stay where you are, don't come any closer, stay!'

This would be underlined by placing your lead hand in front of you in a stop sign. This tactic can even work in-fight if someone tries to attack you whilst you are fighting/defending yourself. I have been grappling on the floor with one opponent when his mate has tried to join in against me, noticing this I used an in-fight fence by telling the guy that if he joined in I was going to batter him afterwards – he quickly changed his mind.

Conscious Physical Fence – Posturing

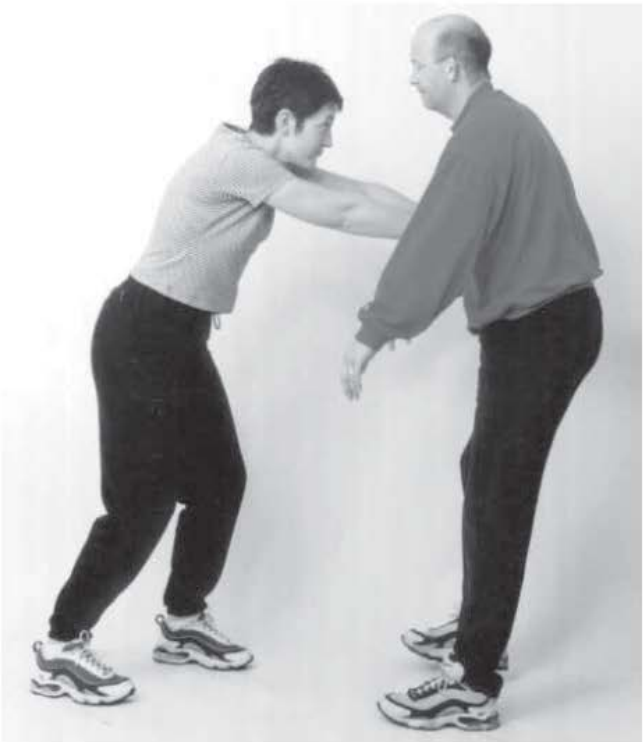
If you find yourself facing a potential attacker who is constantly touching the fence and giving you signs that his attack is imminent, but you can't bring yourself to attack pre-emptively, then you need to create a gap between you and him and take the fence to a conscious level (so that your opponent realises that you are taking control). If he is trying to bridge the gap and take down your fence, but you are not prepared to attack, then you MUST take the fence to a conscious level or you will face grave danger: the fence will be crushed and you attacked as a consequence.

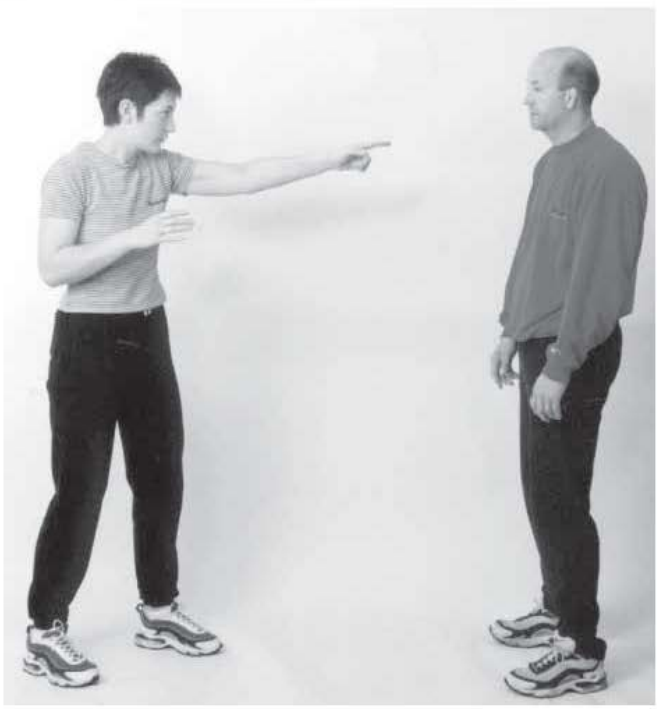


It is important with the conscious fence to create a gap – about 5 feet would be good – between you and your opponent. You do this by stepping back, away from the attacker, whilst simultaneously using your lead hand to shove the attacker so that he also moves back. Creating this gap can also be done using a slap and step back, a two handed shove or a Thai leg kick. As long as, after the contact, you step back and create a gap between you and he. If you find that it is impossible to step back, perhaps your back is against a wall or something similar, then you should create a gap by pushing the antagonist back.

The intention of the sharp shove (or whatever device you use) is to trigger adrenalin in your opponent, thus hopefully triggering his 'flight response' (making him feel the urge to want to run away). So, if the situation has reached an impasse and you think it is going to become physical, but you do not want to pre-emptively attack him for whatever reason – then shove him hard on the chest so that it knocks him backwards and out of immediate attacking range. This minimal physical contact will cause an adrenal release in the opponent. Back the shove up with a very aggressive verbal fence like, 'Stay there, don't ****ing move!', using expletives to add intent and aggression.

The Fence





The reasons for the gap are manifold, not least because it takes the opponent out of his striking range. What it also does is take the opponent from a state of reaction to a state of response – from 'fight' response to 'flight' response. Let me explain: if you shove the opponent, but not out of range, he may automatically react to the shove with a counter-shove, or an attack, of his own. He'll do this without even thinking because it is an automatic reaction. Whilst in fight or flight mode we are in what is known as 'mid-brain', and in mid-brain we are hardly discernible from animals. Our prime objective in mid-brain is survival, and if that means running away that is what our instinct will get us to do. In effect, by staying within strike range you are forcing the opponent into a 'fight' response, and he will react like a cornered animal. His instincts (which will have been in his genes through many, many generations) will inform him that he is cornered and that he should 'fight his way out'. (This is not a good thing for obvious reasons.) If however you shove him out of attack range you will trigger his 'flight' response and give him the instinct to run or freeze because he is no longer a cornered animal, so there is no longer a reason to fight. He won't even know this on a conscious level, but thousands of years of instinct will inform him that he is no longer cornered and he should run for his very life. Even if he does not run away, the fact that he feels like running away will create confusion and self-doubt triggering more adrenaline and a downward spiral to capitulation.

Once you have created a gap (and the confusion) the opponent is forced out of attack mode and into escape mode. The only way that he is going to be able to override this very strong emotion is to consciously disregard all natural instincts and move forward. Not an easy task, especially if the adversary is not an experienced one. This very often effects what I like to call the 'sticky feet syndrome'. The attacker may very well want to move forward because peer pressure demands that he fight and not run away, but his feet appear stuck to the floor, his body lurches forward as though trying to move, but his feet stay stuck firmly to the ground. This is because natural instinct is telling him to run for it.

Once you have created the gap make yourself a hard target by 'ballooning', or 'stalking'. This is done by pacing left to right without taking your eyes off the opponent, at the same time you shout out verbal commands like, 'stay there, don't move!' and point to the opponent, this acts as a secondary back up fence to the verbal.

Interestingly the ballooning also triggers innate instincts within the opponent that go right back to the dawn of mammalian man, when we were not at the top of the food chain and were prey to bigger animals. Your antagonist will literally feel as though he is being 'stalked' before attack. The thought that he is being hunted like a wild beast will serve to

increase his woe. If you watch the cheetah when it hunts the antelope, he balloons (or stalks) just before the attack – in fact most animals do, we are no exception. It can be used by us as an attacking tool to trick the opponent into a flight response, or against us – often inadvertently – to effect the same 'freeze' or 'flight' tendencies.

You should back your ballooning up with a physical fence (pointing), and a verbal fence in the form of strong commands, 'keep away from me, stay where you are!' etc. If you make this display loud and aggressive and splay your arms erratically this would be classed as 'posturing' (which I will go into in great detail in my book *The Art of Fighting Without Fighting*). Basically though, 'posturing' is the art of fighting without fighting. It's what animals do in nature, generally with other animals of their own species. Rather than fight and kill each other and thus threaten the survival of their own species, they posture by making themselves as big and as aggressive as possible, to trigger the flight response in their opponent, defeating them without injury. I recommend that you take advantage of your opponent's reaction to your posturing and make your getaway as soon as possible.

The Psychological Fence

The psychological fence is a fighter's reputation or confident/aggressive gait – this places an invisible fence around you that only the very brave will try to pass.

By walking tall and appearing fearless you put off many potential attackers who will not see you as a victim.

The Negative Psychological Fence

Deliberately dropping the physical or psychological fence by pretending to be scared or unthreatening can draw the opponent forward onto your intended attack – he walks into a trap. This is a good ploy for the very experienced player, but not one that I would recommend if you have not got heavy attacking artillery. In other words if you are going to use this technique to create an opening for your attack, first make sure that you know how to attack otherwise you fall in to the 'dog chasing the fire engine' category. If a dog chases a fire engine and suddenly catches it, he doesn't actually know what to do with it. Similarly, if you draw an opponent into an attack but don't have an effective attack prepared yourself, you are up shit creek.

The Invisible Fence

An experienced player will use what I call the invisible fence. That means he will have the confidence and experience to face an opponent without employing a physical fence. He knows his range and his enemy so well that he can sense when there will be movement and he can feel bad intent. If his opponent moves forward, he will move back or use a stop hit attack instinctively.

On the one hand the physical fence will control range and prime your attack, on the other, if you are not sure whether to strike or not, the fence allows you time to maintain a relatively safe zone whilst you plan a course of action. You need to bear in mind of course that decision-making this late in the game is not a good thing, although sometimes it is unavoidable.

Chapter Three

Action Trigger/Brain Engagement

An 'action trigger' is a word or sentence that you can use to trigger action. When facing potential menace it is very often difficult to initiate a physical attack, never quite knowing the right moment to 'go'. A key word or sentence will take away that decision-making. Your chosen word or sentence will automatically initiate your attack. Preferably you should use a submissive question, as opposed to a flat statement. This will serve the multi-purpose of switching off the opponent's adrenaline, brain engagement and action trigger. The submissive question is also a subliminal intimation to you antagonist that you wish to elongate conversation, whereas shorter sentences, certainly single syllables, send the message that conversation is coming to an end and a physical altercation is about to begin.

Whilst the flat statement, i.e., 'I don't want trouble', is submissive and can act as an action trigger it does not adequately engage the brain, because it does not demand an answer. Neither does it suggest that you wish to elongate the conversation. Even an abstract question can be multi-purpose, i.e., 'How did the City

get on today?' because of the confusion factor, after all, what has the 'City result' got to do with the attacker wanting to punch your head in? Of course this all works nicely within the context of the four D's (dialogue, deception, distraction and destruction), your multi-faceted question being 'deception' and 'distraction' before the 'decision' of fight or flight. If the antagonist proffers a question you may wish your pre-emptive 'blurb' to be in the guise of an answer to it, or you may wish to feign deafness by saying, "Sorry mate, I didn't hear you. What did you say?" As long as it is a question, it will beg an answer which will adequately engage the brain long enough for you to act. I also try not to ask a question that can be answered 'yes' or 'no', i.e. 'Can we talk about this?' Questions like this do not engage the brain as well as a question that demands a longer answer, i.e. 'What are you trying to say?'

One thing is certain, the longer you take to 'act' the graver the situation becomes, especially when faced with more than one antagonist, time is of the essence, don't waste even a second.

In summary

Once you have put up the fence and lined-up the antagonist with your chosen technique (this should be done within the first seconds of any confrontation) and you are sure that an attack upon your person is imminent, utilise the response sequence previously

detailed. If you have to attack, distract and engage his brain with your chosen trigger sentence then, if no other option is open to you, pre-emptively strike from your pre-cocked 'line-up' position. Your engaging verbal should veil your attack. It's very easy here to start getting lost in the explanation of what is occurring. The bottom line is, if you have no other option open to you, ask the assailant a question, hit him whilst his brain is engaged and then run away. It's that simple.

Chapter Four

The Knock Out

Everyone talks about the knock out merchant with reverence because very few fighters seem to be able to achieve the elusive KO. When you talk about knocking out an opponent people often look at you as though you are talking about the impossible. That's because they don't have the knowledge. With the right information and bags of courage the KO is very attainable.

There are many contributing factors that combine and intermingle to form a knock out on an adversary. The most important factor is not, as you might imagine, a powerful strike, but an accurate one. A powerful attack that is not accurate is very unlikely to knock an adversary out. Neither is it a matter of being big or heavy – size is irrelevant. An 8 stone woman who punches her weight will have no trouble knocking a much larger adversary unconscious, if she is accurate.

The next most important factor to accuracy in achieving a KO, is deception. The adversary who does not expect the punch cannot prepare for the punch, therefore the impetus of the punch is maximised. To attain a KO you rely heavily on the looseness of the adversary's neck and jaw muscles, if they are not

braced when you strike the jaw, a huge shaking of the adversary's brain will occur, it is this shaking of the brain that will cause unconsciousness. If, however, the adversary sees the strike coming, he will brace himself and thereby minimise the shaking, consequently unconsciousness does not occur so readily.

Verbal disarmament and brain-engagement are pivotal in the execution of an effective KO. The 'fence' allows you to utilise your entire body weight from a stable, balanced posture whilst your verbal, mental disarmament engages the adversary's brain for a split second – this is your window of entry to launch a pre-emptive attack. While the brain is engaged, even for a second, the adversary will not see the punch/attack coming. Because he doesn't see it coming, he does not brace himself for the strike; the jaw and neck muscles are relaxed, maximum shaking of the brain occurs followed closely by unconsciousness. Also, brain-engagement will cancel out any spontaneous response that your antagonist may have in-built. He will not react during brain engagement. For the same reason (as mentioned in Chapter Two), attacks that are launched outside tunnel vision also have a great effect – the attacker does not see, so cannot prepare for them.

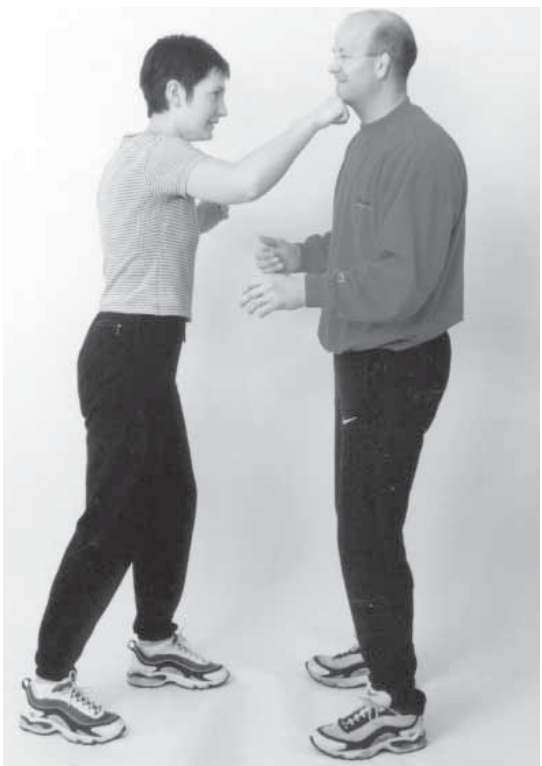
For best results you should strike the jawbone anywhere from the ear to the chin, if struck correctly

this will cause the aforementioned shaking of the brain that brings on unconsciousness. If you strike by the ear this will cause minimal shaking of the brain and a short spell of unconsciousness. The further down the jaw you strike the bigger the 'brain shake' and the greater the probability of unconsciousness (also, if unconsciousness does occur it will increase the spell of unconsciousness). By the same count, the further down the jaw you strike the smaller the target area becomes.

A punch on the point of the jaw will have maximum effect but holds the smallest target. The jawbone when struck along the jaw line causes a shaking of the brain. However, when it is struck on the point of the chin the knock out occurs in two phases. First the clivius and the anterior edge of the occipital bone are pushed against the lower portions of the pons and the anterior surface of the medula oblongata. Next, by virtue of the 're-bounding effect', the medula oblongata bounces back against the internal surface of the occipital bone and the posterior edge of the foremen magnum. In essence, the double impact causes the medula oblongata, the most sensitive part of the brain, to concuss, thus causing temporary cancellation of the functions of the central nervous system.

The Apple Tree Hypothesis

The chances of such a strike are lessened by the fact that the target is only about one inch in diameter. I call it the 'Apple Tree' hypothesis: if you shake an apple tree at the base of it's trunk, heavy shaking of the upper branches will occur, and lots of apples will fall. If, however, you shake the tree high up the trunk, minimal shaking of the upper branches will occur, and very few apples will fall. It is recommended, therefore, that you aim your blow at the middle of the jaw line (on the curve), where the target area is larger and the effect of an accurate blow will cause unconsciousness of a reasonable duration, certainly long enough to effect escape.



The first thing to do, before you strike, is look at the target area on the jaw, if you do not, you are not likely to hit it. When you strike, do so with your best technique, preferably off the back leg to ensure maximum body weight utilisation. (An experienced fighter may throw the technique off his front leg). Don't stop the punch and merely strike the target, punch through it with your blow and your body weight. (There is a school of thought that says punching off the back leg is telegraphed and slower than punching off the front. Let me tell you that the time difference between punching off the back and the front leg would not register on a normal clock, we are talking about a difference of a split second. So, attacking off the front leg may be quicker, but the difference could not be seen by the naked eye.) Speed of punch is not the major factor anyway: I know slow punchers that get KO's in every encounter because they are so good at engaging the brain before attack. Whilst the brain is engaged time stops for the opponent, probably for split second, this is the window of entry for your attack. If time stands still for a second your attack need only be as quick as that and you are in.

A direct hit will cause unconsciousness in an adversary immediately, his fall will then add to his defeat, because the unconscious head will usually meet the floor very heavily. If you are on target, but not right on the button, your adversary will, likely as not, fall to the

floor in a semi-conscious stupor from which he usually recovers quite quickly, so get away as soon as possible. Even a blow that is off-target should at least stun the adversary giving you enough time to run. As a matter of course, always try to verbally/ mentally disarm and engage the adversary before you strike, this will greatly enhance the chances of a KO. I would always, when possible, advise you to use a punching technique as opposed to anything else, because the hands are economical, fast and usually closer to the target (jaw), than most other attacking tools. When using the fist to strike, for best effect, strike the line of the jaw with the two major knuckles. If you cannot or do not use the fist then make sure you use the hardest part of whatever attacking tool you do use. 'Bone to bone' is always most effective. You may attack the jaw underneath (uppercut), around (hook), straight (cross), or over hand (hook), depending upon your preferences and strengths. All of these approaches will have the desired effect if accurate, though hooking punches seem to be the most effective.

In summary

1. Line up your adversary using 'fence' to control range and trigger attack
2. Look at the jaw
3. Mentally disarm him and engage the brain, using your verbal action trigger
4. Strike
5. Escape

Chapter Five

Attacking Off The Fence

The sheer control of the fence allows you valuable seconds in the very early stages of a confrontation to assess a situation and decide your options. Should you eclipse the guy, try to talk him down or attempt to run for your life? It is not my right to tell you what you should do, only to offer up the possible options. Your instinct (what we like to call the 'second attention'), should also, if sharp, inform you of your options – if it does, listen to your instinct over everyone else. However, we are not the hunter-gatherers that we once were and our instincts have been blunted somewhat, very often they will send you the wrong information. Frequently, they do send the right information but we, as a race that rely more on exterior information, do not listen, or we listen but do not believe, or we listen and believe but still do not act because our survival mechanisms are rusted from under use. They do say, after all, that if you don't use it (whatever 'it' may be) you lose it. I have found this to be true.

By training under pressure, Animal Day and the like, we are oiling our survival techniques and taking them for a spin. These instincts, like the skeletal muscle, like the brain and not unlike most things in this

mechanical existence, will atrophy if they are not used regularly. Although we no longer need to hunt for food and gather berries or fruit, there is still a threat. This threat comes from our own race now as opposed to other animals competing on the food chain – so we need to exercise natural instinct. Our mammalian ancestors would have had more practice than was necessary from the sabre-toothed tiger and other such adversarial creatures. However, because we are out of practise, we have to find another way of sharpening our warrior tools, so that when today's version of the same tiger attacks us outside the chippy, we do not find ourselves grasping for an instinct that has become a metaphoric couch potato. So get the turbo out of the garage and give it a run now and then, just to stop the working parts from rusting over.

The fence allows you the control – not for long mind you – to be able to choose the best option according to what you have been given. As I have said, if your survival instincts are oiled and ready from constant use your second attention will tell you when it is right to run and when it is right to fight. If they are rusted up (more often than not the case), all you will feel is the downward spiral of confusion, doubt and indecision. You are out of the fight before you are even in it.

If you find it necessary to initiate a pre-emptive strike, then attack off the fence. What you use as an attacking

tool is your personal choice and there is no one best strike that I can tell you here other than the most available attack on the day. Again, because most people are so out of touch with natural instinct, the second attention, they will not 'feel' what the right technique should be and end up falling into indoctrination (the techniques that your teacher has taught you). What I will say however is that out of necessity it is best to employ your strongest, most comfortable attack. There is nothing to gain and everything to lose if you throw anything less.

The attack is your chosen main artillery technique and whilst many techniques should be practised and perfected throughout your training, one or two, the ones that work best for you, should be taken to one side and isolated – these will be the techniques used in your sniper option. Note: I know at this point there will be those amongst us that say we should be spontaneous and 'go with the flow', react to our attackers, let our chi take over etc. and there are times when this does occur.

I've found myself in situations where I have automatically reacted, almost as though I were outside of my own body, and executed the right techniques for the given situation. I did this more by accident than design and whilst I'd love to be able to do this at will, I can't (I haven't yet met anyone who can). Until I am able to react automatically with the correct

response to every scenario, for survival, if nothing else, I will use the method that has taken me successfully through over 300 fights. I have a plan of action and I respond (a conscious, decision-making act) as opposed to react (an unconscious act not involving decision-making). I have a fight plan that I always use and a support system that I can fall back on if all else fails. Whilst many other martial artists – most of these without any 'real' experience – tell me that this is the wrong way, I know that after working it clinically and simply in hundreds of situations that it is correct. I am not alone either: all of the many students that I have taught over the years have worked it as well, if not better than me.

I always plan the first strike. My awareness and perception allows me to do this. I have a profound understanding of today's enemy and I know how to work him. I also have a learned to understand myself and my art – especially what is of use and what is useless. These together allow me to plan a strategy before battle and stop most situations before they really get started. What I will say is that, once the first punch has been thrown – hopefully by me – the rest will be spontaneous, every other shot thrown will be automatic, and to train for this is entirely separate to training for match fighting, 3 second fighting and self-defence. This of course is outside the context of this very exact text. Also worth mentioning is the fact that unless you are fighting against more than one assailant,

a 3 second fight, or an ambush fight that goes beyond a few seconds without a result will fall into the category of 'match fighting'. If you are facing multiple attackers, then the chances are that it will become a mascara unless you are highly skilled or extremely lucky.

Main artillery attacking techniques

There is no sense in beating about the bush and saying that main artillery techniques can be taken from any range, because I don't believe that they can. If punching range is the one most often given in a real situation, then that is where the main artillery should be drawn from. Having said that I always think it is wise to have one or two very strong techniques at every range, after all a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

Hand Techniques

These are the order of the day, and there is little point in manufacturing another range when the one you are already in – or most likely to be in – is the most clinical anyway. Kicking and grappling ranges are far from clinical. They are, at best, elongated ranges where it usually takes several blows or seconds to finish an adversary as opposed to the split second it can take to finish a fight with a good hand technique. This is not to say that I don't rate these other worthy ranges, I spend many hours perfecting them for my own artillery, but in the support as opposed to at the

front line. I know that the grappling fans out there will already be disagreeing with me here because it has already been proven that grappling, especially Ne-waza (ground fighting), is potentate in the open match fighting arena. I agree wholeheartedly. However, we are not talking about a one on one match fight scenario – we are talking about a fight that will explode in your face at the bar of a pub or the counter of a chip shop. We are talking about several potential opponents who will devour you should you dare take the fight down to the ground.

In all of the thousands of street attacks and fights that I have witnessed, hardly any were match fights or became match fights. Most were over as quickly as they began. Many of the fights that did go to the ground usually turned out very badly for the person that was outnumbered. Two of my friends were badly stabbed, in separate incidents, when they took the fight to the floor: one was stabbed by the girlfriend of his opponent; the other by the mother of his opponent. I have also known of several men who were doing well on the floor and then got kicked, literally, to death by the friends of their opponent. So there is a time and a place for grappling, and in its time and place I would bet my house on the grappler winning, but out of context it is out of its depth.

Kicking Range

Firstly you rarely have the range, secondly when you do it is gobbled up by a greedy aggressor that will be in your face before you get your foot of the floor. The best time to kick an opponent is when he falls over. The rest of the time the feet are best employed for balance or making a hasty retreat when you are outnumbered or out-gunned. No offence intended to either kickers or grapplers. This is my truth as I see it from the inside!

Punching Range

Punching range is a very mobile range. An expert puncher can move through several opponents in as many seconds, this would be very difficult with kicking range – kicks are better employed as a finishing technique to a prostrate opponent – and almost impossible with grappling range – which is better suited to the match fight scenario.

One of my favourite punchers, Owen, regularly tore up malevolents like tissue at a snot party, and always with his hands. He weighed less that 10 stone but when he punched your ancestors felt it. Once, on holiday in Spain he was harassed by two huge German fellows, who kept taking the piss out of the fact that he had big ears. (I have to say that his ears are worthy of a good piss-take, but didn't they know that we won the war.) Finally he had enough of their malicious banter and told them so. They did not take kindly to this and squared up to the little fellow.

'BANG! BANG!'

Two clinical punches later the two German lads were as one with the carpet. Owen went back to his beer. Winston was the same, he was so good with his hands that I always felt like the lad was carrying a gun. He was an awesome pugilist. When he put his hands on you it was like an overdose of sleeping pills. John could throw a mean punch too. The other lads used to call him Horlicks because, on the door, he used to put people to sleep last thing at night. I'm digressing, not like me I know, but I am trying to get the point across that, given the present environment and the contemporary enemy, 'hands' are the order of the day.

I will list a few techniques that I use but, basically, any short-range technique, preferably hand technique (as long as it is a finishing technique) will suffice. I would keep clear of time wasting and superfluous techniques – anything flashy or flicky should go back in the lucky bag with the other plastic toys. Once you get this far into an altercation you may have one chance and one chance only – don't waste it – once the opportunity has gone it may never present itself again. Your attack should be a destroying technique that hits your opponent like a steam train, not a silly-flicky back fist that might make his eyes water, (if you want to do that you'd be better employed reading him an extract from *Love Story*).

Trapping/ jamming and the like have their place, but again are also unlikely to have any relevance here – unless your opponent touches, grabs or points, then a basic trap can be followed by a devastating head butt or hand strike. If you hold your fence correctly however, it becomes very difficult for anyone to do this. Once a fight becomes live nothing stays still for long and the concept of flowing through a series of fancy movements is not a sound one. If you beg to differ, then I respect your opinion but please don't try and convince me. Have an Animal Day (a training session where the participants fight all out with very few rules and any range is allowed) at your own club and see for yourself. When you watch someone like the brilliant Rick Young teach trapping it makes you realise what a valid part of your armoury it can be, but, even Rick will probably tell you, it is an incidental range used to back up main artillery technique. Basic trapping therefore is a valid – though very small – part of the support system. A fight goes from talking distance to 'in your face' in the blink of a eye.

People often ask me what is the best means of physical defence and I always reply, 'learn to hit fucking hard', and that's the bottom line. Learn how to hit very very hard and you'll come out of most situations on top. But please learn to do it from the right range: it's one thing being able to hit hard from a comfortable range and from a guard position or perhaps even using combination to build momentum and power, but how

well will you fare when the distance you are used to is halved and you have to punch from a no-guard position? It's a completely different ball game, so it is important to train your techniques as close to reality as possible, so that when you make the step from dojo to street that step is not such a big one. If you are used to compliance in training you've got a very big shock coming to you when the proverbial shit hits the fan.

In the vast majority of situations I have been involved in, I have used a left lead 'fence' to set up a right handed punch – sometimes a cross, sometimes a hook. My base is usually always a very small left lead forty-five degree stance, and I always ask a question before I strike to trigger my action and to engage the opponent's brain. Other people I have worked with prefer a left lead stance and a right hand fence, punching with a left hook off the lead leg. Others still favour a left lead fence from a left lead stance and attacked with a pummelling head butt. For those that prefer the lead hand or reverse hand finger strike is also a good 'stopping technique'.

It is worth remembering that your opponent will be experiencing tunnel vision as a by-product of adrenal reaction. In real terms this means that by placing your attacking hand, left or right, slightly outside of his tunnel vision you can strike him without him seeing

the blow. That's why hook punches very often KO people, because they come from outside tunnel vision.

Brain engagement

To maximise KO potential, always ask the opponent a question before you attack, it engages the brain giving you a blind second before attack. It also acts a nice action trigger for the attack. It doesn't matter what you ask as long as it engages the brain.

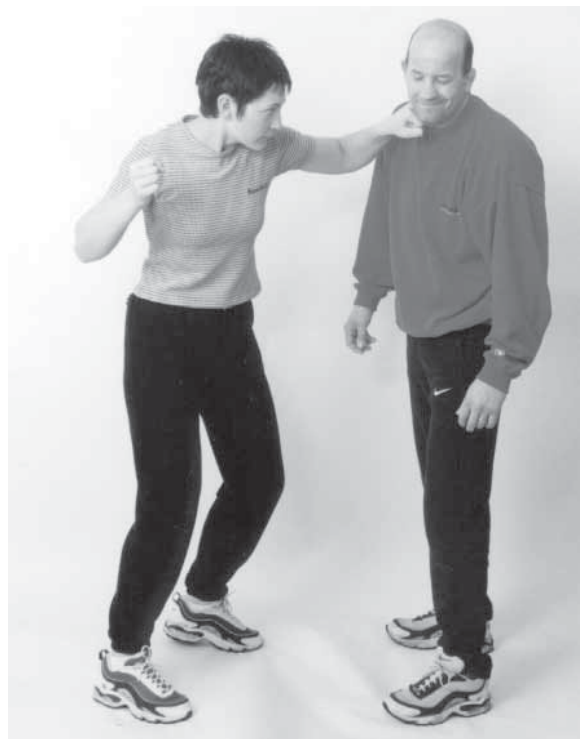
Here are a few of the more common 'line-up' techniques taken from a fence:

Right Cross/Hook

Thrown from the rear of a left-leading stance can be tremendously powerful and effective. Its only real infirmity is that, because it is thrown from the rear leg, it can be slightly telegraphed. From a right-lead stance this technique may be executed using the left-hand.

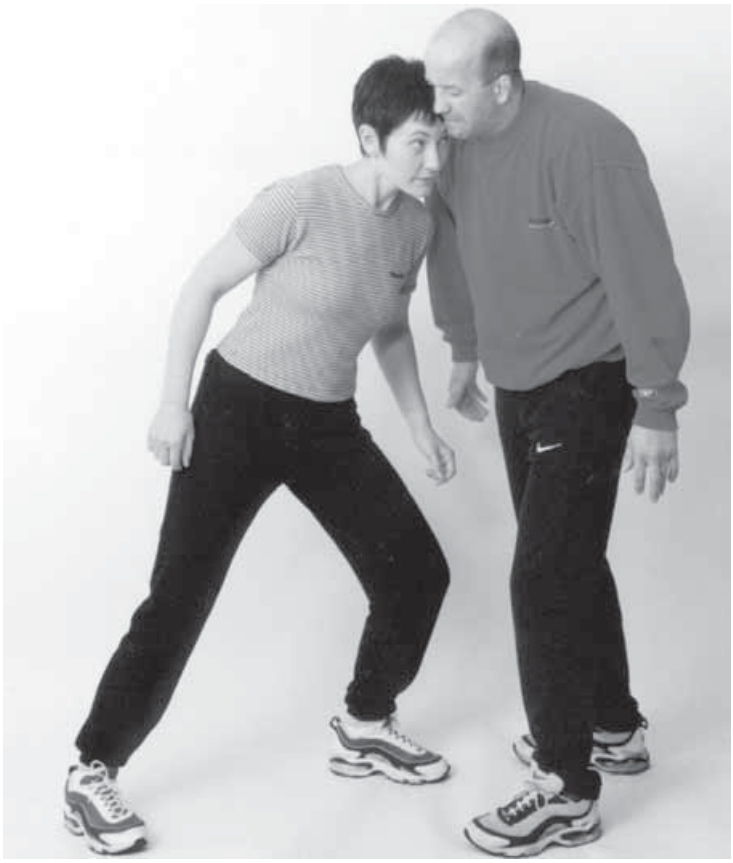
Left Hook

Thrown from the front leg of a left-lead stance. If employed by a 'practised' pugilist, this punch can be very destructive. Because it is thrown from the front leg it is less telegraphed than other techniques and it has less distance to travel to the target. Because of the high skill factor involved it is not a recommended punch for the novice.



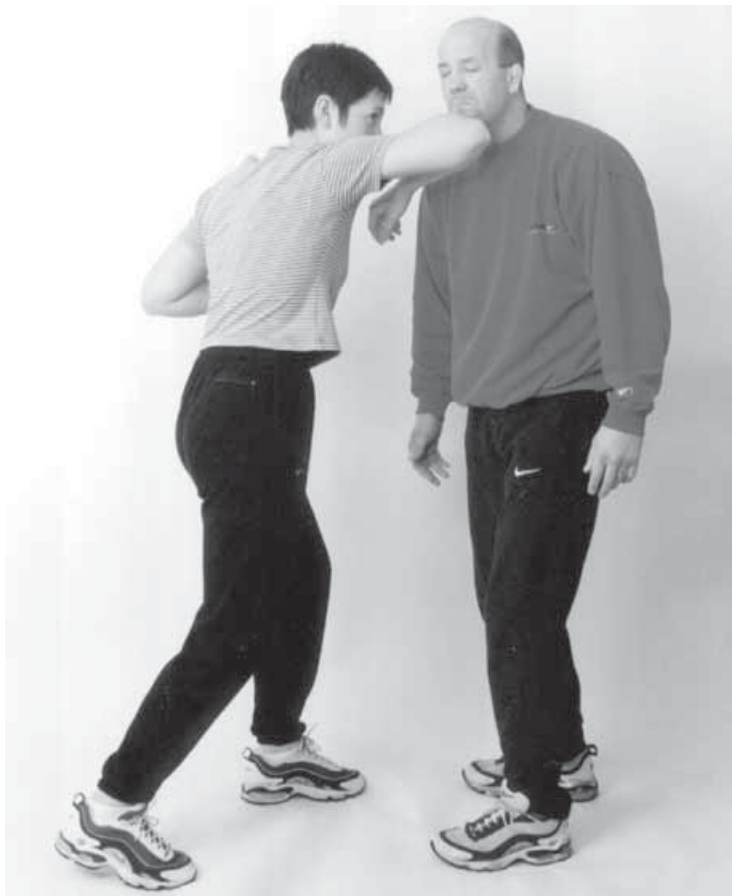
Head Butt

A very 'pain inflicting' attack, usually directed at the opponent's nose. If executed correctly utilising the body weight it can cause enormous damage to an adversary, though it is not known as a knock out technique.



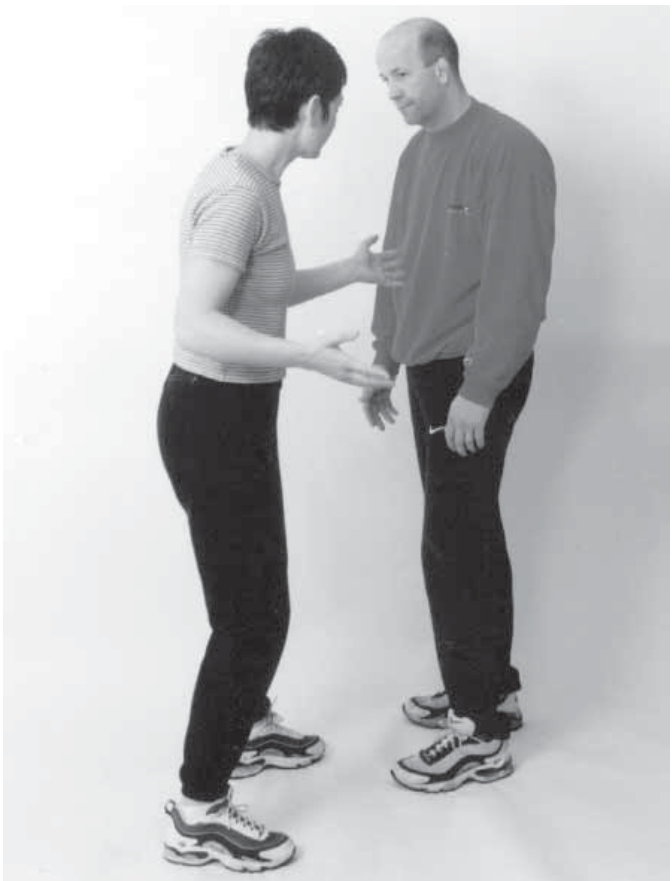
Elbow

If you find yourself very close to the opponent, then an elbow may be the best available technique. Use the left hand as 'fence' and smash the right elbow into the chest or face of the opponent.



Off Centring The Opponent

With hand strikes from a right lead fence you have the option, should you care to take it, to off centre the opponent before you attack him. This adds to the effect of your attack when you launch it. It also has the added effect of opening up the potential target area, the jaw, before the attack. The effect of the attack is more potent because at the moment of impact the opponent is off balance. I off centre the opponent by stepping to the right with my right foot before I attack, I disguise the step or movement with dialogue.

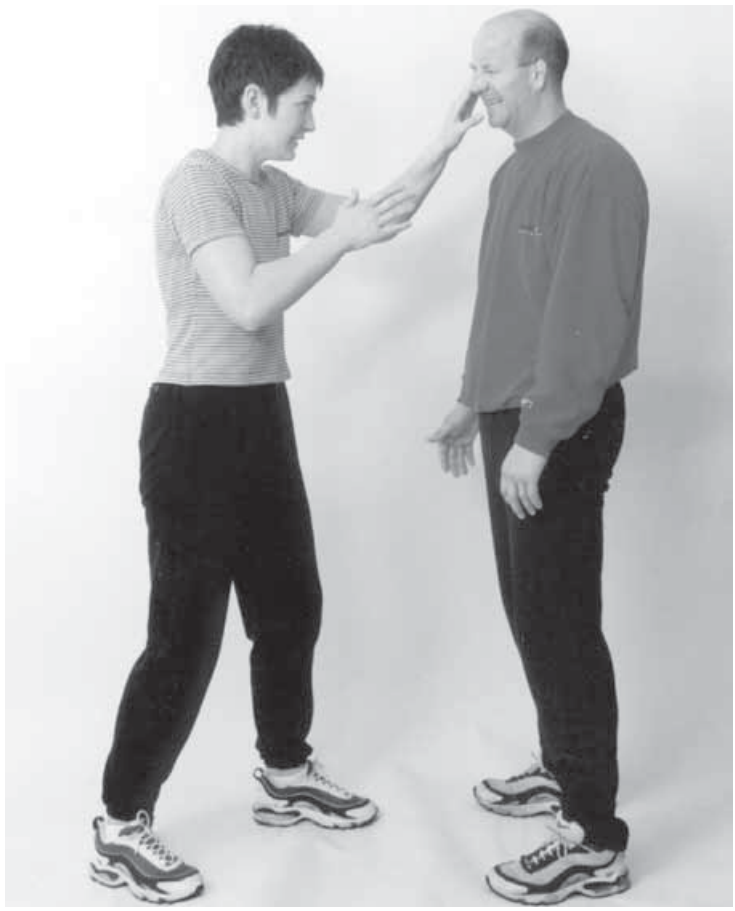


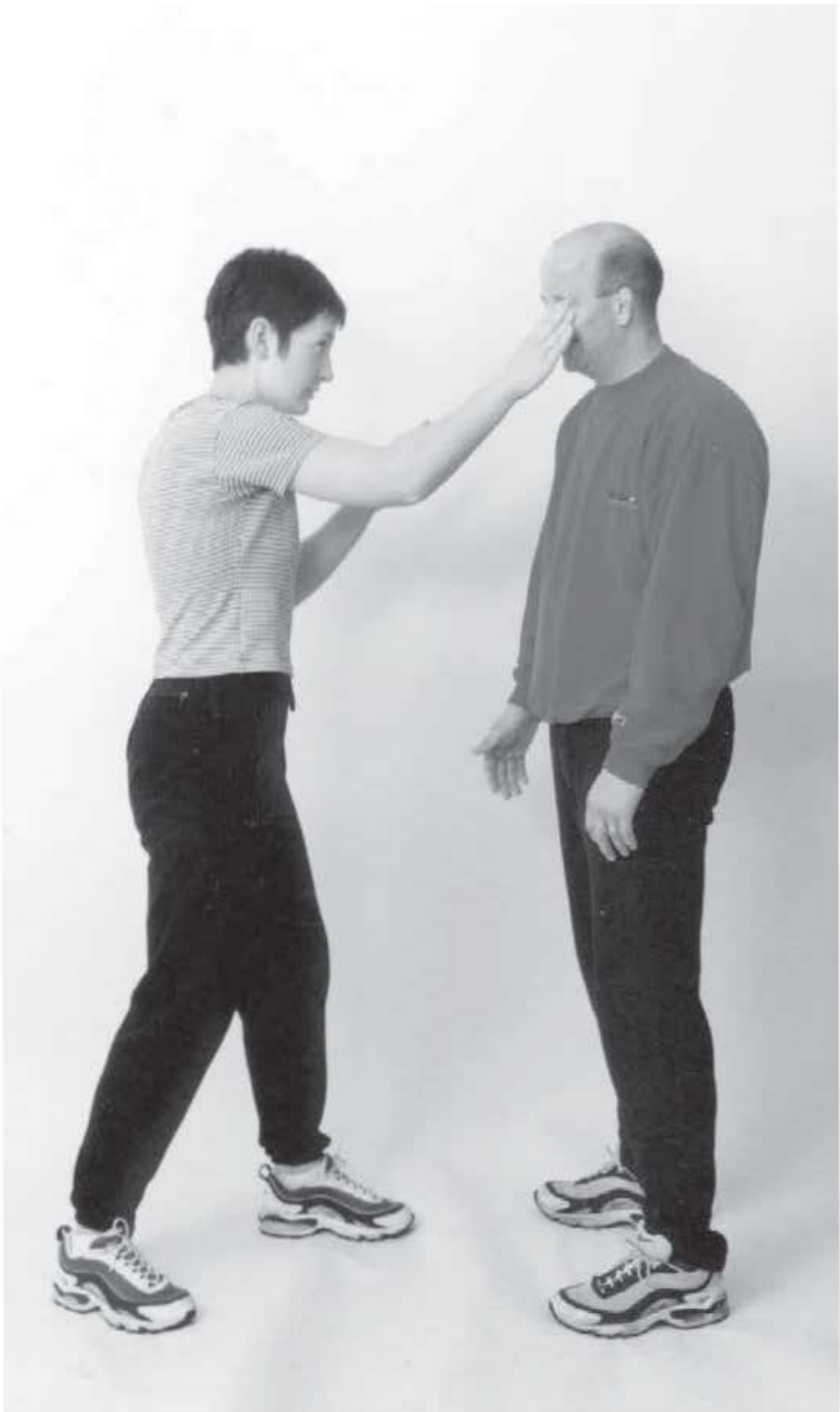
Finger Jab

The finger jab is what Bruce Lee would have called the most dangerous technique available. You can attack using the left hand or the right, preferably from a passive fence, which in any language in the world says 'I don't want trouble'. This is good because the opponent will think that you are already defeated and mentally drop his guard. Strike fast and sharp, up the face and into the eyes as opposed to directly at the eyes. Again, if you attack directly at the eyes, there's a fair chance that the opponent will automatically

retract to defend. If you attack up the face and into the eyes the attack comes from outside tunnel vision, so he won't see it and you are more likely to have a result.

If you do attack the eyes please don't kid yourself as to the result of your attack. All eye attacks are very serious and a direct strike with even a small amount of force may blind an opponent for life. Which is OK if that's what you feel you need to do to save your life, but not so clever if you are just scrapping around in the garden with your next door neighbour Johnny!

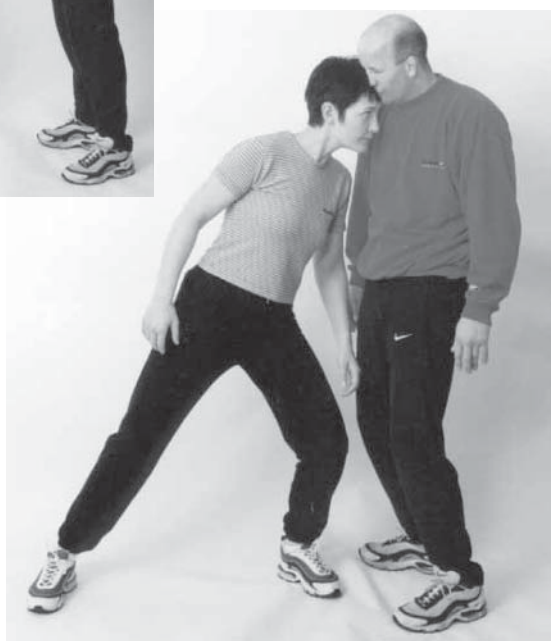




Chapter Six

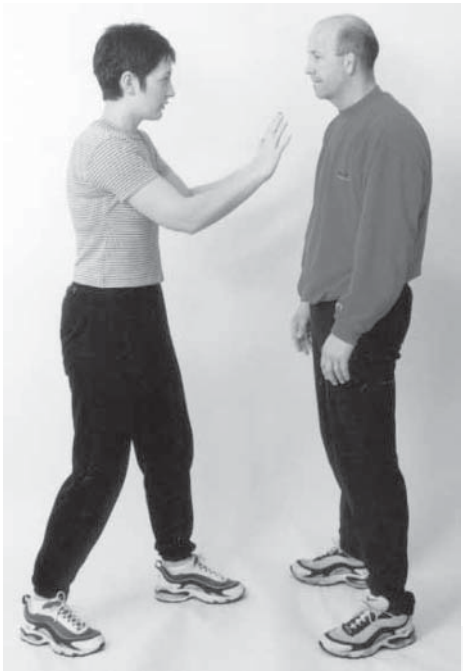
The Mr R Method

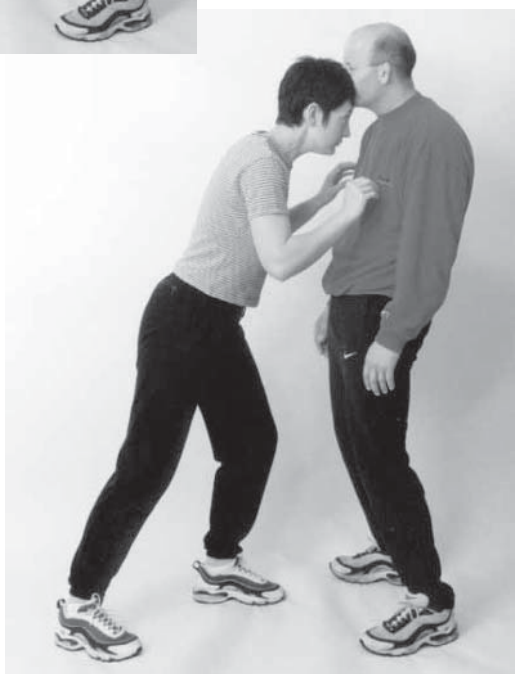
Mr R was an expert with the head and destroyed many opponents with the said technique. He usually worked with a wide, natural fence and used a whiplashing butt that left most opponents thinking that they were cabbages.



The Fence

If the threat was very high Mr R would employ the passive fence and attack with the front of the head thus;



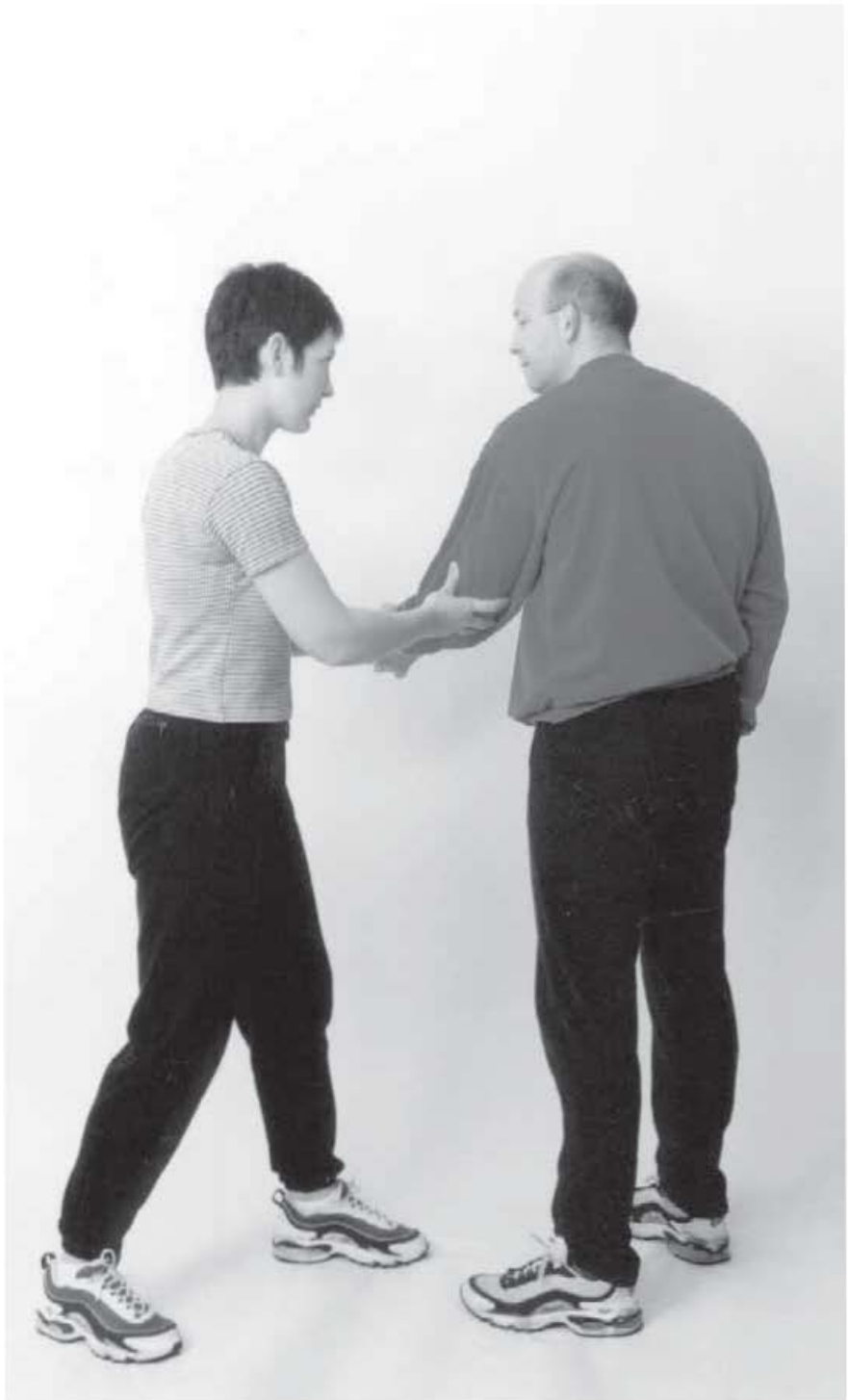


Chapter Seven

The Mr H Method

Mr H was the master of line-up and would often use submissive verbal to talk his way into an attack that very few survived. I once watched him use this to effect seven times in one night with seven KO's and, believe it or not, every single one of them left him with no other choice. He tried to give them all a way out but none took it, so were carried out instead. What he always did was to use verbal dissuasion to try and talk his opponents down, at the same time he would off centre them by taking their lead elbow with his left hand. This would be done in such a gentle way that his opponents never sensed his intent. If at any point during the exercise they showed any resistance or aggression he would strike from wherever he was and end the altercation on the spot. Also, if the verbal dissuasion worked and they were willing to talk he would not attack and let them go on their merry little way none the wiser.

Notice from the illustrations how Mr H neutralises his opponent's right arm by gripping his elbow with his left, and neutralises his right hand and balance by off-centering them. Also by off-centering his opponent he opens their face area for the potential of huge attack.



The sensitivity involved with this, and all areas of fence work, is amazing. Once you become practised with it you can feel the energy of the opponent, you can read his intentions, you learn to feel whether he is a threat or a mouth, and deal with him accordingly. It is very hard to get that across via photos in a book, but hopefully with practice you will feel it. When I'm on the street I feel protected because of the knowledge that I have of the fence. I hope you will too.

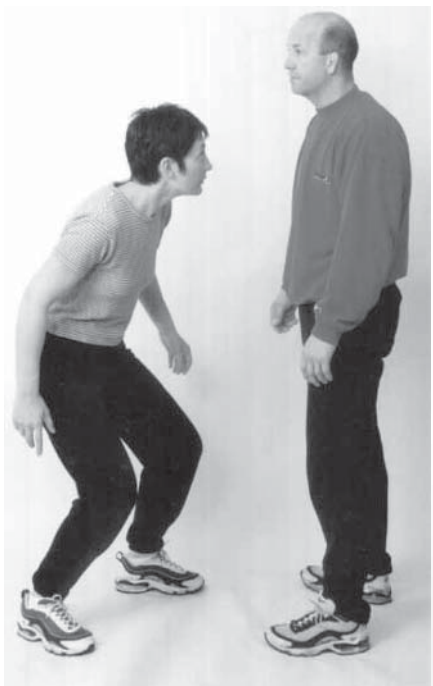
Chapter Eight

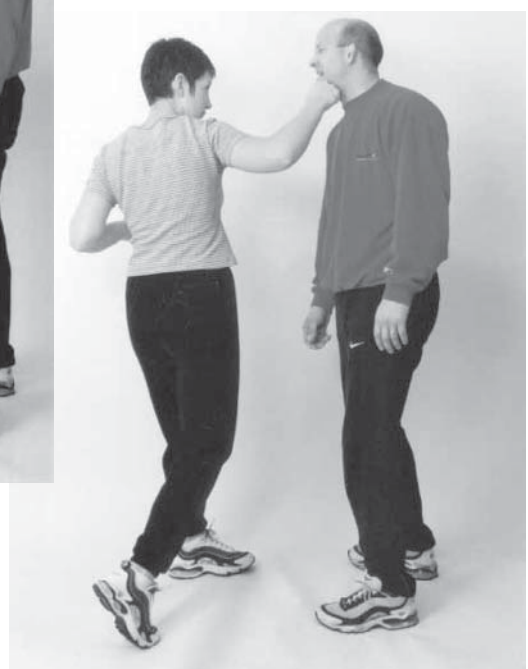
The Mr G Method

Mr G is the friend of mine, the one that the other doormen used to call Horlicks (because he put people to sleep last thing at night). He was an awesome puncher with a very unorthodox, but highly proficient, method of attacking with either hand – a prolific KO merchant and only about 10 stone at his best.

His method entailed waiting until he had no option available to him other than a physical response, whereupon he would unleash an almighty right or left hand punch that had a 95% KO rate. What made his method unorthodox, and therefore worth looking at, was the fact that he used an invisible fence (not so unusual in itself) and he always ducked before he threw his attack. When he first showed me how he worked I wondered how he got away with such a large movement before he attacked but on closer examination I could see that the duck before his attack actually helped prime his opponent. One minute his was in front of them, the next – only for a split second before he eclipsed them – he was gone. He actually ducked under their eye-line, which completely flummoxed them. When he re-emerged he used the bounce from the bend to ensure massive momentum in his chosen strike.

The illustrations demonstrate his method better than my words can. I know in the pictures it all looks a little telegraphed, but believe me when I tell you that this 10 stoner knocked out some of the best and biggest fighters in the city with this very technique – he had it down to a fine art. Like the others this technique is very linear. The characteristics of these techniques are that they all take a very short and direct route to the target, they are all extremely explosive and come from a very short range (conversation range in fact) and they are all, without exception, pre-emptive.





Chapter Nine

The Thompson Method

My own method, I have to say, does vary according to the situation and, at one time or another, I have used all of the techniques described herein to effect. However the greater majority of my line-ups were either right hooks or right crosses using a left hand fence, right hand attack. I always worked from very short range and always attacked first, if I couldn't talk my way out of a physical response. I am not as experienced as Mr T or Mr Anderson but I did have over 50 KO's with this method and it is the method that I still employ today.

I take up a fence as soon as the situation touches conversation range, this is generally straight away. From my experience people that want to argue/fight do not usually do it from a distance, if they did there would be no real threat as you could just turn and walk away. The fence is 95% of what I do, I control from the first second that the threat arises until my opponent is unconscious or controlled or I have escaped. I employ the fence on a very subtle level so that the opponent is unaware of my control, all he knows is – and this is not on a conscious level – that the gap between he and I is blocked and there is no thoroughfare for his attacking tools.

I allow my hands to hover a little so that I can pre-emptively trap and stop his right and left hands. I am extremely sensitive to his body movement, so that he is unable to butt, kick or knee me. If he moves even a fraction I check him with my fence. I stay in a small forty five degree stance to maintain balance and allow me a strong platform from which to attack. Very often I off-centre my opponents before I attack (if I think this will help my cause). Usually I will check behind my attacker (I'm not recommending this, it's just something that I felt comfortable with) to see where he was going to fall when I hit him. If I was in a bar and there was a table full of innocent people drinking at the table I would alter my attack, or the angle of attack, so that my opponent didn't fall into the table and hurt these people. If the table was full of his friends, people that I knew would attack me as soon as the fight kicked off, then I might deliver my blow so that he did fall into the table and injure them, and himself of course. If I was in the street and my opponent had his back to a busy road, I might not want to send him spiralling into heavy traffic, therefore I would alter the angle of my blow so that he fell on the spot or to the side, as opposed to backwards. Equally, if he was side-on to the road I might change the angle of my blow so that he fell backwards, i.e. onto the pavement and not sideways onto the road and into the traffic.

You might find this all ridiculous, after all why should we be benevolent to someone that has chosen to attack us for no reason? Personally, I don't want to kill anyone because it is not in my nature. Secondly, and equally as important: if I kill another person then there is a great probability that I am going to jail for a long time, not an experience that I want to add to my CV.

I reiterate that as an experienced fighter I could quite often alter the angle of my opponent's fall – but not always – sometimes it wasn't possible because I felt the threat was too great. If you are inexperienced you'd be foolhardy to attempt this, because that moment of contemplation could create an attacking window for your opponent to climb through. Believe me when I tell you that your opponent will not be thinking about the consequences of punching you into a table of drinks or heavy traffic. I include it in here simply because it is a part of my method.

The way I control the fall of the attacker is by changing the angle of my punch. If I hit them very heavily with a straight punch, on the point of the jaw they are likely to go out and back. If however I throw the same straight punch but clip down on the jaw at the last second, I will get a KO, because the clipping punch will shake the brain, but will not drive the opponent backwards – rather he will fall on the spot.

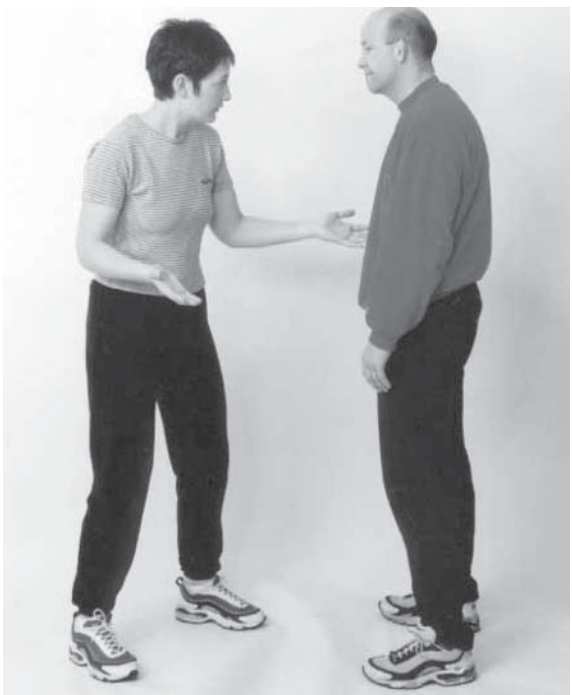
With a hook punch it is slightly different, as anyone with KO experience will agree. For instance a driving right hook to the jaw, which in theory should knock the opponent out and send him spiralling to the left, does just the opposite. Usually the opponent falls flat where they were standing (their head generally hits the floor where their feet were) or even the opposite way, quite often falling straight into you. This can be dangerous if they are not completely out because, in their panic they can grab you and end up in a grappling match.

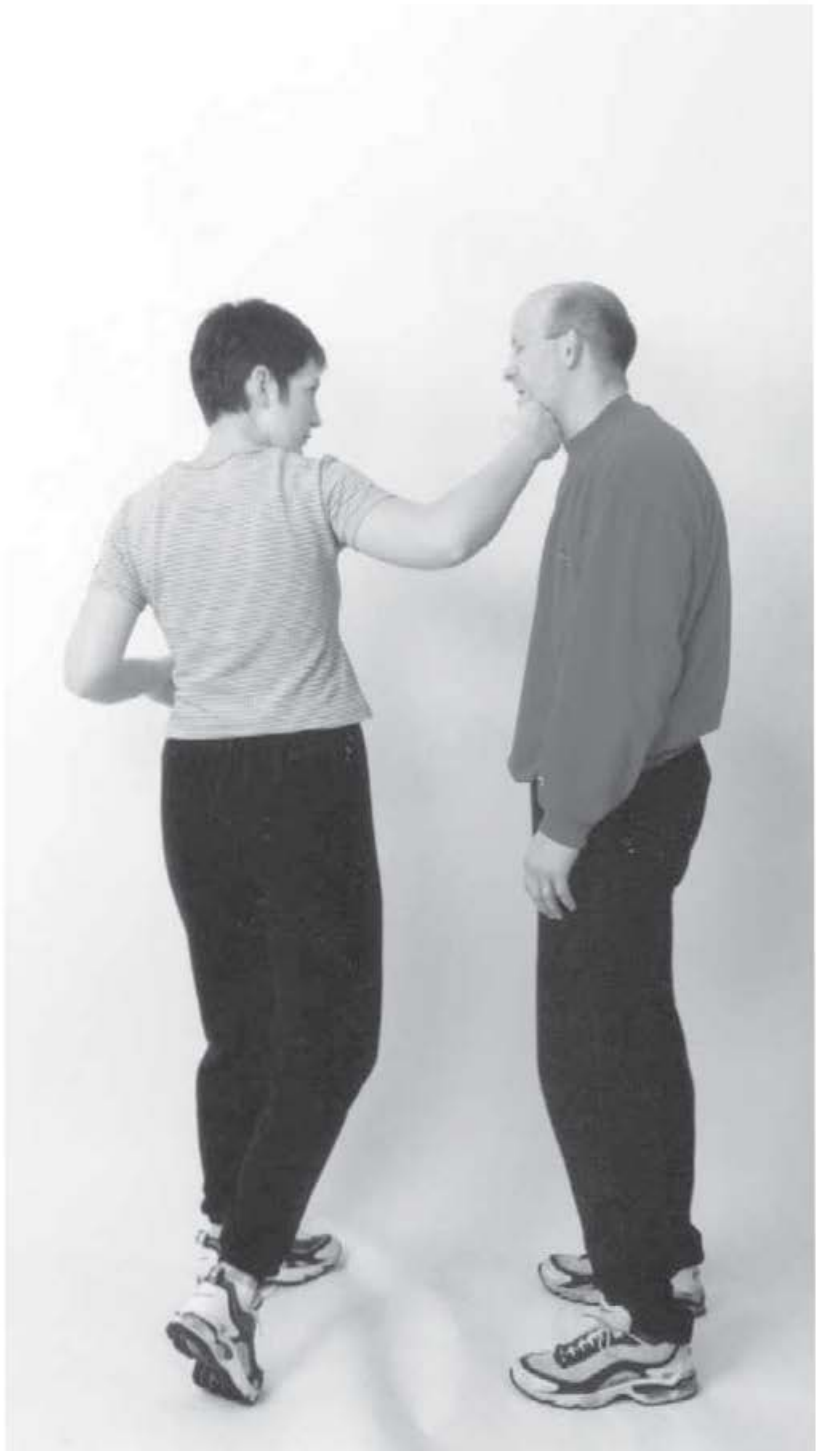
The great danger with the driving hook is that the opponent falls like a slaughtered cow and their head smashes heavily onto the floor. If they are going to die as a consequence of your attack this is what usually always does it. If you clip the jaw with a downward hook as opposed to a driving hook you can lessen the intensity of the fall. With the downward clip they still fall unconscious but not so deeply, the fall then tends to be a tumble as opposed to a crashing fall.

Before my attack I always ask a question to engage the brain, this gives me the blind second I require to allow my attack to enter unhindered. The fact that the brain is engaged also heightens the probability of a KO because it is the punch that isn't seen/perceived that does the most damage. The question also acts as an action trigger, when I ask the question that's it – the punch is on its way. This is the way I train and this

is the way that I fight. I always aim for the jawbone, usually about half way down between the ear and the point of the jaw. If the first attack does not do the job, then I automatically fall into the support system and attack with techniques that fit the energy that he gives me. From here on in it will all fall into spontaneity and again I will react according to the way I have trained. If I have trained for semi-contact, the blow-pulling point-scoring stuff, then that is what I will get when things go auto. Again, unless you are very good at controlling vertical fighting, specifically the scruffy variety, you will end up on the floor so a sound knowledge of that arena is what you'll need to survive.

Here are some illustrations of my method, feel free to tailor it so that it fits you.



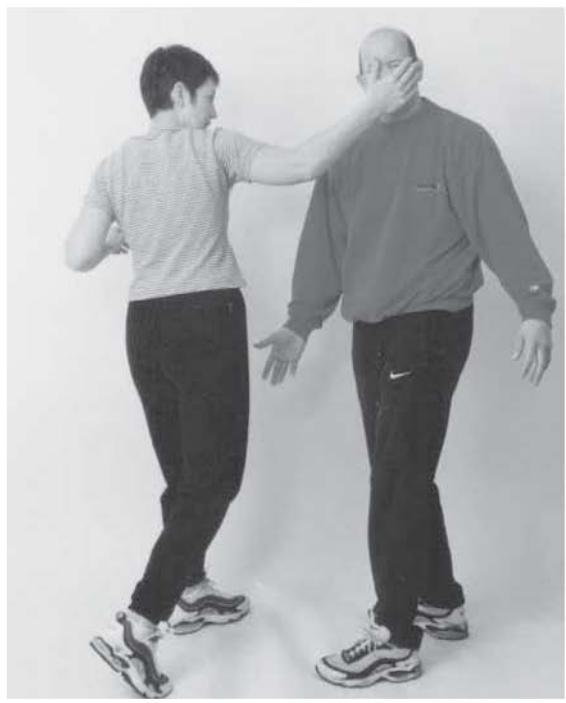


Chapter Ten

The Mr Briggs Method

Mr Briggs prefers the slap, in fact he has it down to a fine art. Taken from the teachings of the 'double hip' master Mr Peter Consterdine (actually Peter's getting on a bit now and it has become more of a dodgy hip that a double hip), Mr Briggs has made the technique his own. The reason I like this method is because of the unusual nature of the fence that he employs. Mr Briggs had 15 KO's in live scenarios last year alone with this technique.

Working from a 45 degree stance, The Briggs method entails pushing the left elbow forward and placing the left hand by the ear, as though trying to listen to what the opponent has to say. This is especially effective in close environments where there is a lot of noise like a pub or a nightclub. You will see from the picture how natural this looks. The elbow works innocently as a blocking fence. The right hand, the attacking hand, splays out in exclamation and he then uses the brain engaging, action triggering statement that fits with the pose, 'sorry what did you say'. From here you attack in a close hooking motion and slap or palm heel to the jaw or ear for the KO. Short, sharp and ferocious.



Chapter Eleven

The Mr T Method

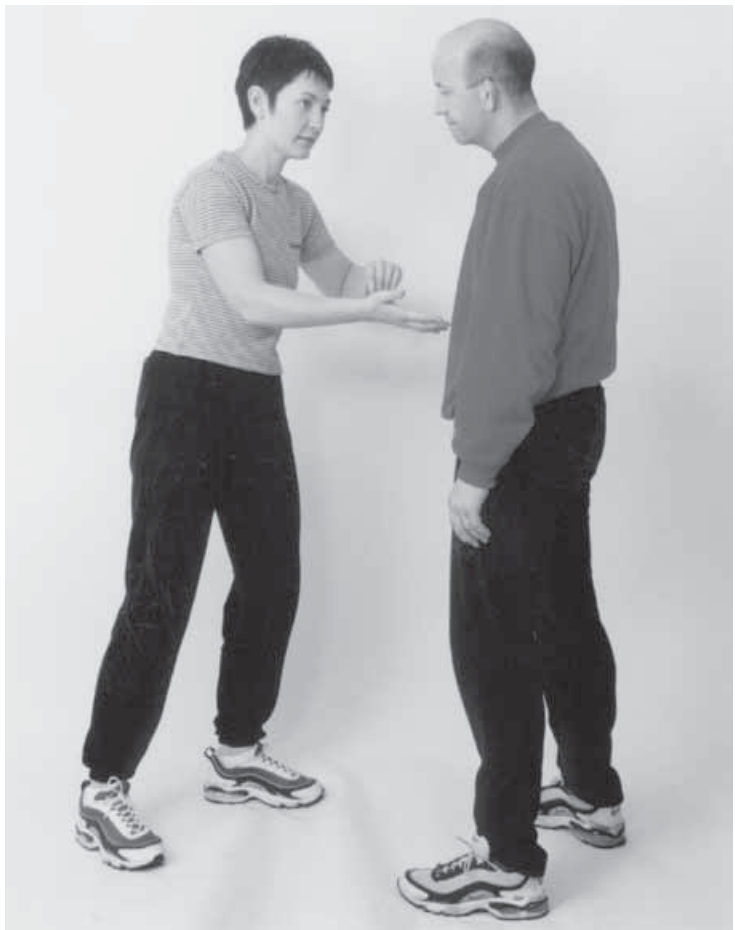
Mr T, to my knowledge, was in over 500 fights over a fifteen year period and was probably the most prolific Judas-merchant I have ever encountered. Lovely hands but a master in the art of pre-fight deception. I could probably fill a book with his techniques alone. However, I haven't the room so I'll take the one that I like most and that he employed to great effect on so many occasions. I like to call it the sliding elbow technique. This is specifically for situations where you have a ledge at elbow height to lean on.

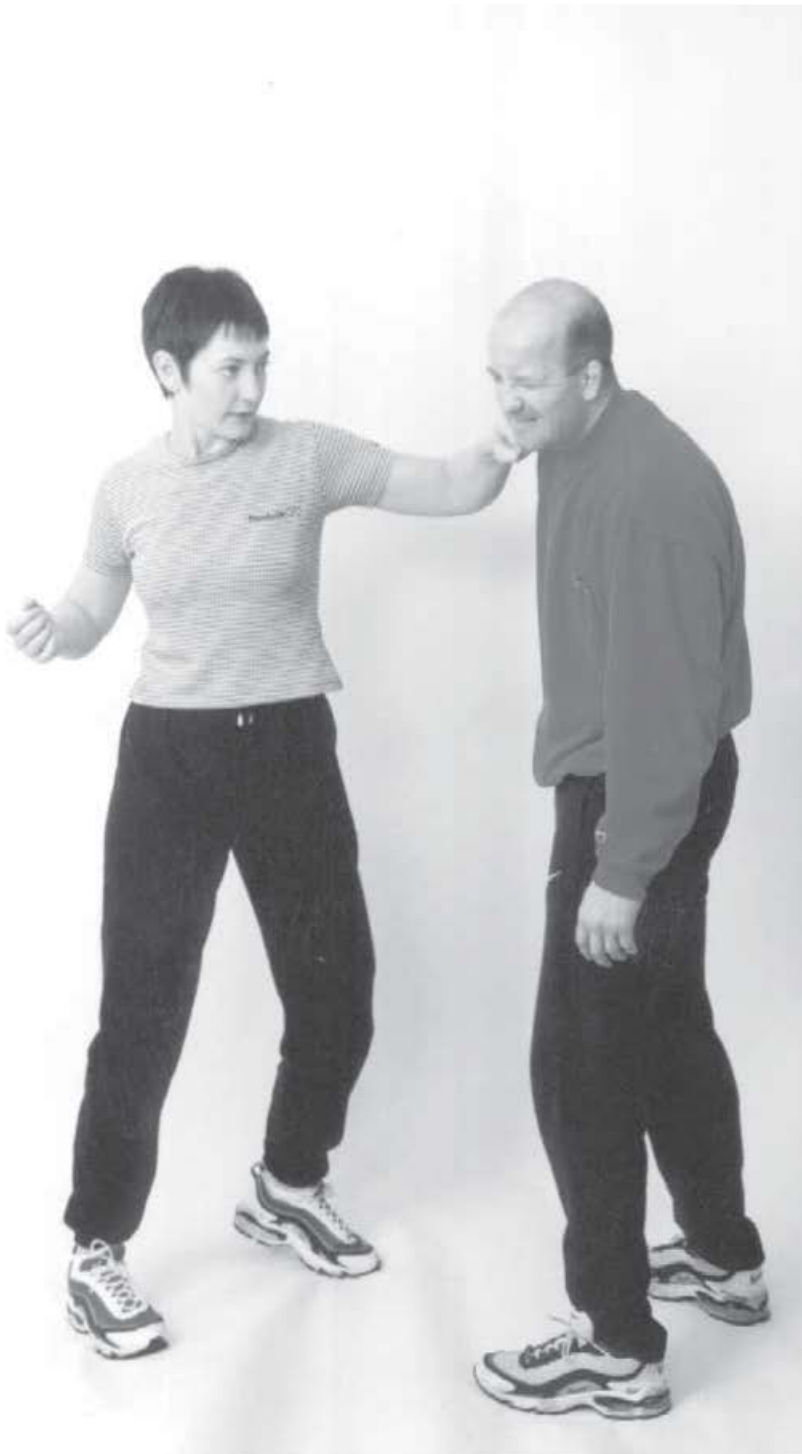
This technique incorporates leaning very lightly on a bar with your attacking arm, in this case the left arm and using the right hand as fence. This is a very dangerous situation because of the very close proximity, so caution and great sensitivity is called for. Control the gap with the right hand fence, lay the left elbow on the bar, this gives it the effect of being redundant as an attacking tool, so the opponent will take very little notice of it. The left hand will fall just outside the tunnel of vision, so when you do attack with it you'll get maximum effect, because it will not be seen, only felt.

As and when you feel an attack is called for (only you can know for sure when the time is right), ask a

question to engage the brain and then attack with a left hook or slap, sliding the attacking arm sharply off the bar and driving your hips through at the end of the technique, to ensure power and depth of attack. This is an advanced technique and should not be considered unless you have an excellent lead hand left hook.

Note: we didn't have a bar in the photo studio, so please try and use your imagination and see a 'bar' under the left elbow of the attacker.





Chapter Twelve

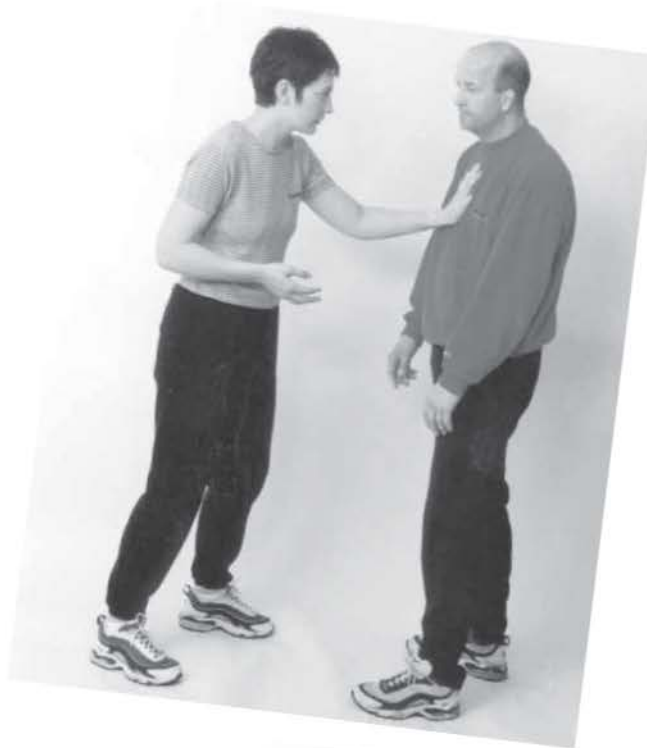
The Mr Anderson Method

As far as modern combatants go Mr Anderson, my teacher in things real, is the master. Although he was innately well-versed in different ranges he specialised, like all the greats that I worked with, in hands, specifically the left hook. I think it is worth mentioning that Mr Anderson – who you can read about extensively in my three autobiographical books *Watch My Back, Bouncer* and *On The Door* – was not formerly trained in any fighting art. All of his knowledge has been learned in the field as it were. Again his technique is unusual in that he uses a left, lead hand fence and a left lead hand hook as the attacking tool. This is very specialist and should not be undertaken unless your short range punching power is top notch.

The Anderson method incorporates using the left hand (fence) to feel out the potential attacker's intentions. If your opponent touches the fence, then he is trying to bridge the gap. If he is trying to bridge the gap, this being a precursor in the attack ritual to actual attack, then he is preparing for assault. Mr Anderson would gently push the antagonist back with

his left hand to check out their intentions. If they were posturing and not fighting, then they would stay back out of range and therefore no longer be a threat. If their intentions were violent then they would aggressively push back to make up the lost space. At this point Mr Anderson would hit them with a left hook that few, none that I ever saw, would survive. As he attacked he would step slightly across with his lead left leg and drive the punch through. Add to this the fact that his opponent would be moving onto the attack and you have the recipe for a KO. His attack was extremely short range, probably moving only six inches to a foot before contact.

The illustrations will show you better how the Anderson Method works. Timing is important here because he is attacking as the opponent moves forward. A second out and you will miss, losing possibly your one and only opportunity.

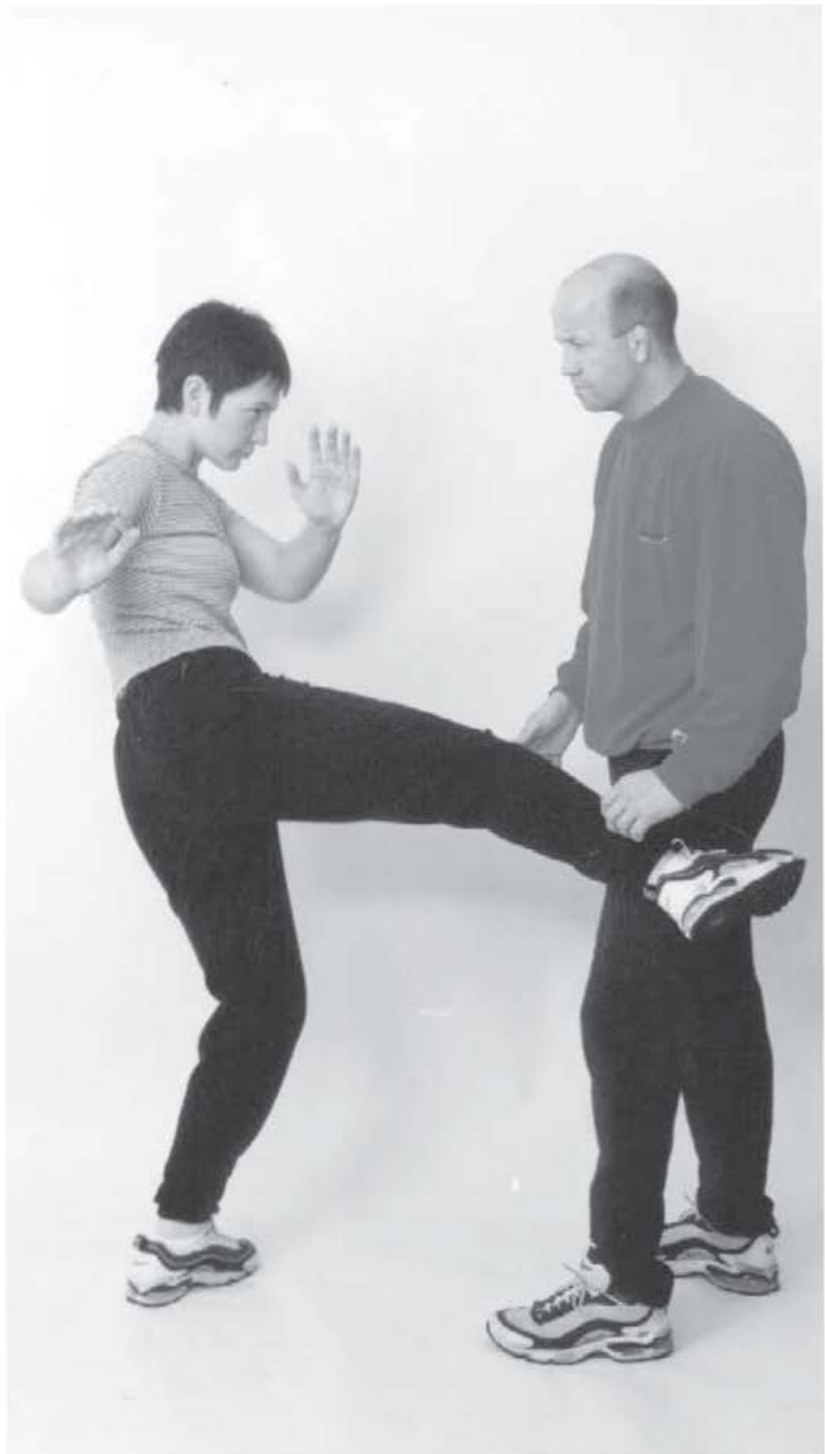


Chapter Thirteen

Kicking Off The Fence

If I kick off the fence – I very rarely do – I will only do it as a part of posturing, that is, to psyche the opponent out. I will use the kick as a minimal attack to trigger adrenal dump, and hopefully capitulation, in my opponent. If I kick it will generally be very low, groin and downward. The Thai leg kick is my ideal choice because it not only triggers adrenaline it also partly disables the fighter, so that if he does decide to 'have a go' he will be doing so with half of his armoury lost.

If you decide that this is the option for you, make sure that you know what you are opening yourself up to. If you try to use the kick as a finishing technique you could be in trouble because it very rarely works, and if the guy is strong and overrides the attack you are in for a match fight. Only use the kick if you sense that the opponent will fall for the posturing ploy, and immediately after the kick make sure that you create a gap between you and him, to trigger his 'flight response'. Make the attack your very best effort, anything less and you may not trigger adrenal dump and therefore not get the desired response



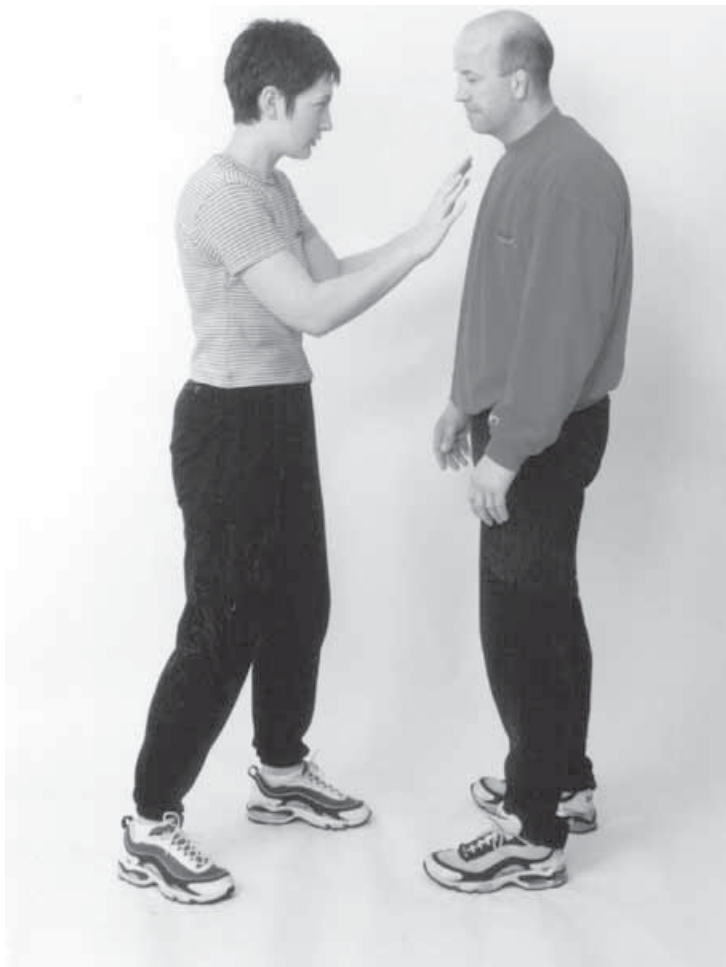
Chapter Fourteen

Choking Off The Fence

The spin and choke off the fence is a technique I used when I felt that a restraint was viable. Note: I have never tried to restrain someone that was a high-risk threat, it would be too dangerous. Only use this if the threat is low risk and you feel you can get away with it.

The illustrations will show the spin and choke a lot better than I can describe here, but basically I would work off a staggered fence. When I felt the threat was beyond dissuasion I would ask a question to engage the opponent's brain and then sharply push his left shoulder with my right hand and pull his right shoulder with my left hand, spinning him so that his back was to my chest. I would then wrap my right arm around his neck and couple up with my left to make the choke. From here you have the option – and this will be determined by how the opponent reacts – to talk him down using the choke as leverage to persuade him, or choke him out if he persists in being violent. If you are working in security you also have the option of dragging him off the premises using the choke.

Beware: this is a highly dangerous technique that should always be used with great care – many have been choked to death, usually by accident, with this technique. Practice it in the controlled arena until you have the control to employ it in a tempered manner. Of course there are more ways to choke or restrain off the fence, this is just an appetiser to give you direction should you prefer to restrain as opposed to attack.



The Fence

Conclusion

As a final point on attack, don't ever pull your technique. If a situation has become so bad that you are forced to hit someone to protect yourself then they deserve everything they get – pulling your technique is the quickest way to the graveyard. So either attack all-out or do not attack at all. The only exception to this rule is if you are very experienced and feel you can judge the potency of your attacker. I was often faced with people that were not enough of a threat to demand a good hiding, but enough of a threat to be dangerous, so I would use an adrenaline switch (posturing) to psyche them out and thus beat them without coming to arms. This requires a lot of discernment, so unless you are very experienced don't take the chance.

It is also my recommendation that, once you have hit your opponent, you make good your escape. This might not be how you see fighting, but it is good self-defence. The only time you need to 'finish off' an opponent is when he is still a threat, if he is not then there is no need, (I realise that this contradicts some of the things I have said in *Watch My Back, Bouncer* and *On The Door*, but bouncing is a different arena where many rules have to be broken to keep the peace long term). I have seen many people go for a finish, when a finish was not necessary, losing as a

consequence because their attackers have grabbed them. Use the distraction of your attack to make good an escape – that is my advice if the situation is one of self-defence. Also don't forget environmental fences like tables and chairs. If you are in your car that can also act as a fence if you lock the doors – in fact it is about 3000lbs worth of fence.

If you ever find yourself in a situation where you are restraining one opponent and are approached by a second, use the one you are restraining as a fence by facing him towards the second potential attacker. If No. 2 persists slam No. 1 to the floor between you and No. 2, again as a fence. There are many ways of using your natural surroundings as a fence, use your imagination, and as long as it gets you out of a bad situation and it doesn't harm innocent people then use it.

Make the fence your own with diligent practice and you will be a lot safer when violence comes a calling – and it will find you wherever you are – or face the potential of going into battle with no main artillery.

Good luck, keep training and be a nice person. God bless.

Geoff Thompson, 1998

WEIGHT TRAINING

FOR THE MARTIAL ARTIST

GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

First published 1995.

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Important note

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

About the author

Geoff Thompson has written over 20 books and is known worldwide for his bestselling autobiography, *Watch My Back*, about his nine years working as a nightclub doorman. He currently has a quarter of a million books in print. He holds the rank of 6th Dan black belt in Japanese karate, 1st Dan in judo and is also qualified to senior instructor level in various other forms of wrestling and martial arts. He has several scripts for stage and screen in development with Destiny Films.

He has published articles for *GQ* magazine, and has also been featured in *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Arena*, *Front* and *Loaded* magazines, and has appeared many times on mainstream television.

Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine.

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For my beautiful wife Sharon.

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INTRODUCTION

BY DAVE TURTON
SENIOR NABA COACH

Dave has been a NABA (National Amateur Bodybuilding Association) life member since 1964, an area judge since 1974 and the official stage manager for the Mr Universe, Mr Britain, Mr Scotland and Mr North-West Britain bodybuilding championships. He is a senior instructor in weight training for NABA and has trained with former Mr Britains and a former Mr Universe. Dave Turton is also a 5th Dan black belt in Goshin Kai ju-jitsu.

Before Geoff goes into listing the best exercises and routines for the use of weight training for the martial artist, it is advisable to explain more of what weight training is, and, more to the point, what it should be.

There is a long history of the multitude of different systems of personal combat, full of examples of the use of progressive resistance exercises to improve an individual's own abilities. Therefore it would be superfluous to list the history of 'weight

training' in the combat arts, and more beneficial to try to understand how best to use it both for you and your art.

Firstly, weight training is to be viewed in the same context as running or stretching. That is as a supplementary aid to the combat skills, not as a replacement for them. Weight training is used to improve the strength of a weaker trainee and to give work to the muscles pertaining to your art. After all, if you had been a bodybuilder and power-lifter to competition standards since your sixteenth birthday, and now at 26 years old, six-foot tall and fifteen stone and are just starting karate, your power development wouldn't be a worry.

What weight training is not:

In the early days when sportsmen and athletes were trying out the weights in order to become better at their chosen event, a few mistakes were made. Most sportsmen with no knowledge of how to train with the weights turned to the weight-lifting and bodybuilding fraternity for help and advice. Unfortunately very few knew how to use the weights to improve other athletes' performances. Weight-lifting, bodybuilding and power-lifting are separate athletic sciences which happen to use the same tools, but in totally different

ways (not everyone in a tracksuit and trainers is a sprinter, a miler or a decathlete). After all, would you ask a soccer coach to train a rugger team simply because both sports use a field, a ball and two teams?

So, the well-meaning bodybuilders put the other sportsmen on bodybuilding routines, and the hoped for results didn't materialise.

Bodybuilding is about developing the many muscle groups so that, along with a loss of fat, the shape, balance and development are at the optimum levels. It is important to a competitive bodybuilder to ensure correct and balanced development of all muscles and muscle groups. Intercostals, serratus and brachialis need work but a karataka shouldn't be too concerned about minor muscles, more about improved functions.

So, weight training isn't bodybuilding, nor power-lifting nor weight-lifting.

What is weight training?

Weight training is the use of progressive resistance training to improve the power output, function and strength of an athlete. It strengthens weaker muscle groups, and aids in using the increase in strength and power to improve your sport. Seen in this way we can now look more at how useful weight training can be.

There are two further divisions and subdivisions in the understanding of this subject. Firstly, the art that you are in, secondly, your personal needs. Taken in context, the needs of judo, karate, kendo, tai-chi, sumo, kyudo and wing-chun, are all different; likewise, the needs of a 16-year-old girl in aikido will naturally differ from those of a 26-year-old, sixteen-stone judo international.

People differ, so their needs for weight training also vary. Arts differ; punching and kicking arts have different needs to the pulling, lifting and throwing arts. Admittedly, these are generalisations, but they are quite valid.

So now we can look at the exercises and the ways that we can use them to improve our chosen arts.

Weight Training for the Martial Artist

For the purposes of martial arts improvement, we will first look at the muscle groups most used, the 'best' exercises, sets and reps (repetitions), and some exercises that you shouldn't use.

There will be two basic routines, one more useful for the punching and kicking arts, such as karate, tae-kwondo and Chinese 'hard' systems; the other for the holding and throwing systems like aikido, judo, some of the ju-jitsu systems and wrestling.

Two further pieces of advice:

1) As your other training (running, stretching, etc.) will work the endurance factors of your overall fitness, then weights should be used for fairly low repetitions (in the 6-12 range) to balance out the fast and slow twitch fibres.

2) All the body should be worked; there should be no weaknesses. Having said that, extra emphasis should be placed on the muscle groups that are most used in your art.

As far as the type of training goes, I have preferences for the use of weights. I shall list my do's and don'ts, with appropriate

explanatory comments when needed (don't worry, we'll get to the nitty-gritty eventually – but the more that you know about and understand a subject, the better for you).

Firstly, forget the many machines: basic bar-bells and dumb-bells, bench and squat racks are enough. Many machines make your muscles work in fixed 'grooves'; with free weights, you find the balance and adjust with secondary muscles.

Secondly, where feasible, use dumb-bells in preference to bar-bells. The reasoning here is that a bar 'fixes' the hands in a set position (which never occurs in a combat situation), and also a balanced bar doesn't allow for that little extra work and coordination for the weaker side.

Thirdly, train muscle groups and not just individual muscles. Nowhere in a combat scenario would *any* muscle work totally independent to others. For example, seated concentration dumb-bell curls are great for the bodybuilder who desires that extra 'peak' on his biceps, but it is of no use to a judoka trying to lift a sixteen-stone opponent.

Enough said, enjoy the book, learn from it, and make weight training an integral part of your martial arts' training.

PREFACE

This book is less about developing physical strength and more about building a sinewy armour. It is not meant as a tool to make you a physical leviathan, rather it is about using iron to mould your character and enhance your martial art. Physical strength, per se, is of little use in self-defence if it is not backed by a steely resolve and good physical technique. So please don't look upon this text as a 'get big quick' manual for those with a sagging esteem. Weight training (in this context) is merely an addition to your martial art. Fights are not won at a high level with strength; they are won with cunning and sharp technique. A small man with good technique and a strong intention will take a big man with no technique out of the game before he even realises he is in it.

On the door, as a bouncer, I was subject to many unsolicited attacks where quickness to the punch and good technique meant the difference between winning and ending up in a hospital bed. So the old argument that training with the iron slows you down is unfounded. The weights never once impeded my ability to be first; I never woke up with a crowd around me once in my nine years. I always made it my job to

be first, and if I thought for one second that weight training was going to subtract from that in any way I'd drop its use like a hot brick.

This is not meant as a comprehensive text on weight training. There are many methods and theories when it comes to training with weights, and this is just one of them. Weight training is a very subjective business and I am not in the game of trying to put anyone – or their system – down, but this is one of the ways I train with the weights. It has worked for me and countless others and hopefully it will work for you.

There is one word that rises again and again in what I practice: that word is REAL.

Is what I am practising real?

Will it help me to achieve my ultimate goal?

If the answer to either or both is 'no', I don't use it. After nine years of having lived with violence and the violent I have developed a bullshit detector that allows me to smell shit from a thousand yards away. I just know when something is of no use.

Weight Training for the Martial Artist

Training with the weights is a means to an end, with me anyway, rather than an end in itself. My aim is not to develop a beach physique, though as a by-product that might be nice, nor to be able to lift heavy weights just so that I can say 'I can lift heavy weights'. My aim is not to get massive in the false belief that 'big is hard', because it isn't. My aim was, and still is, to train with weights progressively to aid me in my budo.

A by-product of training with the weights is that it helps to develop confidence and esteem: if you look good, you feel good, but confidence is of little use without the back-up artillery. If there is no back-up artillery, as in a good combat system, confidence is just a sugar pedestal that will crumble as soon as the rain comes in.

I have loved doing weights for the past thirty odd years and love it still today. It has enabled me to back up good technique with quality muscle and the same muscle mass has also enabled me to take it when the going got a little tough. I sincerely believe that training with weights will enhance any system and give added confidence to its exponents.

Also worthy of a mention is the fact that, with the use of weights and a good diet, I have managed to put on five stone of good quality bodyweight over the last years. It might be that you are happy with the bodyweight that you carry, you may even want to lose weight. The beauty of training with weights is it allows for all this: if you want to gain weight, maintain weight or lose weight you can, the option is there for you, though of course diet is the bigger part of this computation.

CHAPTER ONE: A LOOK AT THE EQUIPMENT

When writing a book of this genre, one cannot just assume knowledge, so this chapter is to show the reader the working tools of weight training. For those that already know what the equipment is and how it works, feel free to move on to the next chapter.

As Dave said in the introduction, free weights are preferable to machine weights for the stated reasons. So I won't list the myriad machines that may be found in the gyms around the country. This is not to say that machine training is not sound, it surely is, but you can't beat free weights.

Dumb-bells

These are used to work all aspects of the torso (and occasionally the legs). Used in a curling, pushing, pressing, and lifting manner. They are held in each hand and used alternately or together. They are comprised of a short metal bar to which free weights are attached to each end; the weight

is secured with 'collars' that stop the free weight from slipping off the bar during exercise. (Pic 1)

1

Loose Weight

Cast-iron or vinyl discs that come in different sizes. Different weights are used to add weight to dumb-bells or bar-bells. (Pic 2)

2

Bar-bells

The bar-bell is a steel bar which varies in size, usually from 1.2m (4ft) to 2.1m (7ft) long. Loose weight is added to each end of the bar in equal proportions and sealed with collars to stop the weight falling off during exercise.
(Pic 3)

3

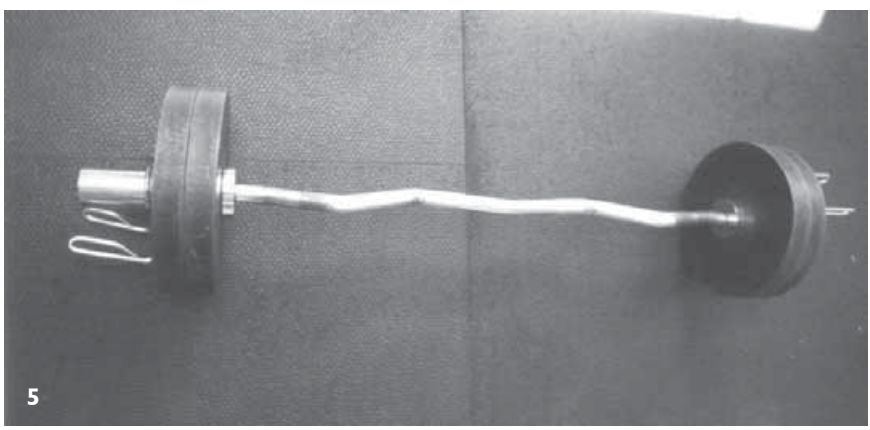
Triceps Bar

This is a special bar used for training the triceps (back upper arms). When working the triceps in the forthcoming routines it is an option for the trainee to use this piece of equipment or the ordinary straight bar. (Pic 4)

4

Curl Bar

The curl bar is another specialised bar that helps to isolate and/or strengthen the biceps (front upper arm) and triceps (back upper arm). (Pic 5)



5

Flat Bench

This is used for sitting or lying exercises involving dumb-bell and bar-bell training. The flat bench enables the trainee to work the major part of the muscle group; the shoulders and chest. (Pic 6)

6

Incline/Decline Bench

The incline/decline bench is used for sitting or lying exercises involving dumb-bell and bar-bell exercises. The incline/decline bench enables the trainee to work different parts of the major muscle group, i.e. upper or lower chest, front shoulders. (Pic 7)

7

Gloves

Fingerless gloves can help protect the hands when lifting weights. (Pic 8)

Belt

A waist belt is a good protection from back strain when lifting weights.

Clothing

Training clothes need to be comfortable and either baggy or Lycra stretch. During training the muscles expand and can be very uncomfortable if training clothes are tight or restrictive.

Baggy tracksuits, one-piece leotards and tights that stretch (for women); loose-fitting cotton T-shirts or vests and loose shorts (for men) are all ideal for comfortable training.

I always find it a good idea to take a towel, soap, shampoo and a change of clothing for after training. This is preferable to going home in sweaty gear. A towel is also very handy for taking into the gym with you for mopping the brow.

CHAPTER TWO
A LOOK AT THE BODY

Whilst we are mostly concerned here with strength training, it is also worth mentioning that a degree of cardiovascular training (involving the heart and lungs) must go hand in hand with progressive resistance training for overall success. This is because muscles are supplied with energy by the heart and lungs, which in turn increase the blood circulation and breathing to enable exercise to continue. If the heart and lungs are not also trained they cannot keep up with the muscles' demand; fatigue soon sets in and the muscles stop functioning.

The stiffness experienced in the muscles after training is due to a waste product (lactic acid) staying in the muscle. This can be prevented by 'warming down' after training or by further exercise.

WHAT IS MUSCLE?

There are three kinds of muscle in the body, each holding its very own characteristics. I shall list them in order:

1) Smooth Muscle

This is found in the walls of internal or visceral organs; blood vessels and intestines for instance.

2) Cardiac Muscle

This is the tissue that makes up the heart. It can be strengthened by cardiovascular or high repetition exercises such as running, swimming and cycling.

3) Skeletal Muscle

This is a system of long muscles that control the movement of the body. These are the very muscles that we, as weight trainers, aim to strengthen and condition.

THE FUNCTION OF MUSCLE

Muscle has one and only one function: it contracts. This is why our bodies are designed with opposing muscles and groups of muscles. When one part of the body is extended in one direction it takes the contraction of an opposing muscle to bring it back. For instance, the triceps at the back of the upper arm will help to push the arm out in the execution of a punch, whilst the biceps at the front of the upper arm will help bring the arm back on retraction of the punch.

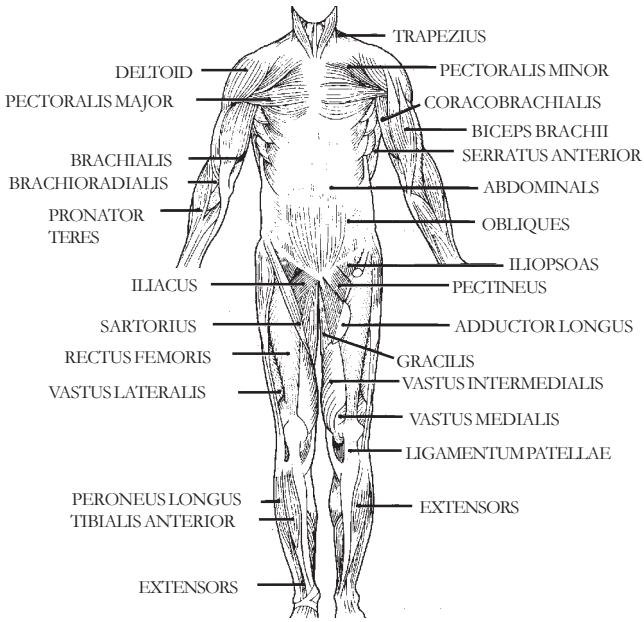
Muscles tend to work to demand; if you place added stress upon them they will expand to meet that stress. If there is no stress placed upon them, for instance when your arm is in a sling for a couple of months, the muscle will deteriorate and shrink. This is why a road digger will naturally develop muscles that a clerk might not. Weight training is a controlled way of placing extra stress on muscles or muscle groups to develop extra size and strength.

The shrinking of muscle due to under use is called atrophy, whilst the increase in size and strength when muscle is subjected to greater amounts of stress is called hypertrophy.

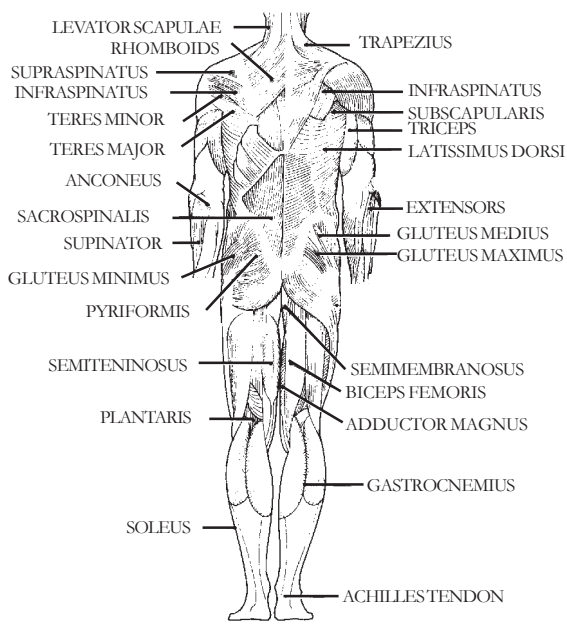
I know that there will be cynics out there saying that your own art will develop the muscles that it needs for use within that art. This is not necessarily true: exercises like callisthenics, running, swimming and the kind of repetition that we do in martial arts to develop technique are of the fixed resistance kind, so no matter how long you do them, you are always contracting the muscles against the same resistance. You may, with this type of practice, learn to do a given exercise or technique for longer periods of time, which means that your endurance has improved, but you will not necessarily get any stronger, no matter how many reps you do.

If you want to keep getting stronger, you have to keep increasing the resistance; that way the muscles have to continue to adapt. The beauty of progressive resistance training is that it never gets easy; every time you feel like it is getting too easy you just add a little more weight to your bar or dumb-bell and the exercise becomes difficult again and the muscles adapt and develop to the new demands placed upon them.

FRONT VIEW



REAR VIEW



There are over six hundred working muscles in the body, some of which are listed above, but we are really only concerned with the major muscles in the body, and more specifically the ones that are used in the execution of our art.

I will start from the neck and work my way down the body listing the main function of the muscle.

LEVATOR SCAPULAE MUSCLE (NECK)

The neck's function is to rotate, turn and support the head. Neck strengthening is very important because injuries to this small muscle can impede everything that we do. It's hard to throw a punch if the neck is injured and multidirectional training is also badly impeded.

TRAPEZIUS MUSCLES

The trapezius muscles aid in pulling and shrugging movements and, if trained, are very powerful muscles. They are situated in the major upper back and get their name because of their trapezium shape.

DELTOID MUSCLES (SHOULDER)

The deltoid, or shoulder, muscles consist of three heads that rotate and lift the arms to the front side and back, and also

tie into the pectoral (chest) muscle at the front of the torso and assist in any movements concerning the chest. The deltoids are used especially in movements that require push or punch from the front or above the head.

TRICEPS (UPPER BACK ARM)

The triceps cover the whole of the back of the upper arm and extend right down to the elbow. They actually take up two-thirds of the upper arm and greatly assist in any pushing or punching motion, especially where the hands are too close together to use the chest and shoulder muscles.

BICEPS (FRONT UPPER ARM)

Quite a small muscle at the higher upper arm that assists in retracting the arm from an extended position and assists in hugging motions.

FLEXORS AND EXTENSORS (FOREARM)

These muscles control the wrists and the fingers, aiding a strong grip.

LATISSIMUS DORSI (LOWER BACK)

The lats are very powerful back muscles used in any endeavour involved in pulling the elbows inwards, pulling the body upwards or hugging.

ERECTORS

These are situated under the pectoral muscle and are primarily used to help in the upward movement of the upper body and back.

PECTORALS (CHEST)

These connect the chest to the upper arm and shoulder. The major and minor parts of the muscle help pull arms inwards (hugging) and push weight outwards.

ABDOMINALS (STOMACH)

The powerful stomach comprises of eight muscles, all attached together in a complex manner. They help support the upper body and move the body inwards. They are also pivotal in helping the body up from a reclined, inclined or declined position.

OBLIQUES (SIDE STOMACH)

The obliques help to bend and twist the body and assist the front stomach in rising from a reclined position.

QUADRICEPS (THIGH MUSCLES)

These are large and powerful leg muscles that extend across the front of the thighs. Used primarily to extend the thighs. Pivotal in squatting motions.

GLUTIUS MAXIMUS (BUTTOCKS)

The glutes help to lift the legs in a backwards motion and assist in squatting motions (when trained they look good too).

GASTROCNEMIUS (CALVES, BACK LOWER LEGS)

The calves help to raise the body onto the toes.

ANTERIOR MUSCLES (FRONT OF THE LOWER LEG)

All the movements of the ankles and toes are controlled by these muscles.

CHAPTER THREE
A LOOK AT YOUR ART

This book is not about what your art is or is not, neither is it about whether or not your art is effective. That would be out of the context of a book on weight training. For more detail on the effectiveness of various combative arts please refer to my other texts, more specifically *Animal Day – Pressure Testing the Martial Arts*.

First and foremost, let's keep things in context: weight training is an addition to your combat art, it is not a substitute, nor is it the missing link in an art that might be lacking when it comes to adapting to a street situation. So let me state categorically here and now that weight training will not magically turn a non-effective art into an effective one. Only correct training in the correct manner will do that. What it will do is add to your response, both physically and mentally, strength, endurance and confidence. It stands to reason that a strong, trained muscle is going to be more effective in a combat scenario than a weak, untrained muscle.

Without wishing to go too much out of the context of weight training I think a little more detail is necessary. Here is a section from *Animal Day:*

'What is the correct training?' I hear you all saying. And for that matter, 'What is the correct art?' This is a sensitive area. So many people think that theirs is the complete art and that others are less, or not at all, effective. They think that they are open-minded and others are not, and that they have all the answers where others have only questions. Even the so-called 'new wave' martial artists who left tradition because of blinkered senior instructors and 'the classical mess', now wear their own blinkers and have, in a way, created their own classical mess.

As far as self-protection is concerned, every system has something to offer, and to say that it does not is to be blinkered. To trash all traditionalists, which seems very fashionable at the moment, simply because they are traditional, or to trash other stylists because they do not follow the same way as us would also be very blinkered. The one thing that all martial arts have in common is that we can all learn something from each other, if we'll only open our eyes wide enough to see.

Understanding your own art means little more than being honest, even if it is only with yourself.

Is your art a kicking art, punching art, or a grappling art? Is it close range, long range, semi-contact, full contact, an attacking art or a defensive art? Whatever your art is, analyse what it is not, and that will be where your weakness lies.

It is also important to analyse whether your main range, be it kicking, punching or grappling, is predominantly short range or long range. Are you a long range kicker or a short range kicker? Long range puncher or short range puncher? Whatever you are, again your weakness will lie in the range – within your main range – that you are weakest at.

Then what you have to ask yourself is: am I effective at my main range? Of course, everyone likes to think that they are, but mostly they are not. As an example, I would class you as a good puncher if you could do three rounds with a good boxer; I would consider you a good kicker if you could do three with a good Thai boxer or taekwon-do fighter; and I would certainly consider you good in close if you could go fifteen minutes with a good wrestler or judoka.

As a young karataka I was predominantly a kicker, but thought myself a good puncher too. I'd worked on the weights all my life and touched grappling so also thought my groundwork to be competent. When I tried to place my skills in the real world of fighting I quickly realised that my main range, kicking, was immediately neutralised by my environment. Most fights start at conversation range, this being punching range, so there was no room to kick in 95 per cent of all situations. If there was room it was quickly gobbled up by a greedy aggressor who wanted to be in my face.

I was a strong puncher; I could hit the bag hard, but basically I was a long range, straight puncher and conditioned to pull my blows on impact 90 per cent of the time. Real fighting is very close range and often demands the better suited hook or uppercut, but they weren't on my curriculum. The first time I hit someone I automatically pulled the punch on impact. I also felt out of range, a range that seemed to disappear before my eyes and wouldn't stay still for a second.

The first time I went to grappling range in the street I didn't have a clue what to do. I bludgeoned my way through and made a hard and long job out of something that should have been clinical. I was also completely unaccustomed to raw

aggression and didn't know how to react to verbal. People were throwing verbal attacks and I didn't know how to defend, counter attack or even simply attack.

Ninety per cent of what goes into a real fight is not in the physical, it is in the psychological: openers, weakeners, primers and even finishing blows are secured with dialogue, the attacker using verbal missiles to attack the psyche. All I knew, all my art had taught me, was the physical response; a little like teaching someone how to dive in the swimming pool but not teaching him how to swim. It is true that fighting arts teach you distancing and timing, but the distancing in the street is different from that of the dojo. So is the timing, because you are fighting at a different range; it is different because it is enforced by the enemy and the environment.

So be realistic when evaluating your art: if you think that your art is good, test it. Not just at the strongest end but also at the weakest end, where the leaks are, then set about sealing up those leaks. As they say, 'a chain is only as strong as its weakest link'.

One of the main weaknesses that I have found in the arts that I have studied, and I have studied most of them, is that

they all, with the exception of western boxing, condition their practitioners to fight defensively, certainly when they teach the self-defence aspect of the art. They teach their practitioners to wait for the attacker to attack, then block and counter attack. In the real world? Too late! Too late by a long shot. It doesn't take much logic to realise that action is quicker than reaction.

Now down to the nitty-gritty of what weight training can do for you and your art. I will go through a list of some of the arts and state which muscles are predominantly used and in what way. If your art is not listed then fit yourself into either the kick-punch category or the grapple-throw category, if your art involves all ranges then all of the following will apply.

It is fair to say that all muscles are used in *all* arts in some way or another, though certain muscles and muscle groups are used more than others. The art heading is also inclusive of most styles within that main group.

KARATE

Karate is predominantly a kicking and punching art, leaning more to the kicking than the punching. The major muscle groups used in karate are: hips (kicking), thighs (kicking and

stance work), calves (kicking and stance work), abdominals (turning the upper body and taking blows), inner pectorals (punching and blocking movements), front deltoids (blocking and punching) and triceps (punching and some blocking).

GUNG-FU

Gung-fu, like karate, is best known for its kicking and punching skills, though often at a closer range than karate. It too leans more to kicking than punching. The major muscle groups used in gung-fu are: hips (kicking), thighs (kicking and stance work), calves (kicking and stance work), abdominals (turning the upper body and taking blows), inner pectorals (punching and blocking movements), front deltoids (blocking and punching) and triceps (punching and some blocking).

WESTERN BOXING

Western boxing is purely a punching and blocking art, though often at varying ranges. The major muscle groups used in boxing are: thighs (for footwork and stance work), calves (for footwork and stance work), abdominals (turning the upper body and taking blows), inner pectorals (punching and blocking movements), front deltoids (blocking and punching), triceps (punching and some blocking), trapezius (for supporting the neck against heavy blows).

THAI-BOXING

Thai is one of the most demanding and ferocious of the fighting arts and covers nearly all ranges, lacking only in ground fighting and, to a degree, vertical grappling. The major muscle groups used in Thai boxing are: thighs (for footwork and stance work and absorbing leg kicks), calves (for footwork and stance work), tibialis and extensor hullucus (shins – for blocking leg kicks), abdominals (turning the upper body and taking blows), inner pectorals (punching and blocking movements), front deltoids (blocking and punching), triceps (punching and some blocking), trapezius (for supporting the neck against heavy blows), biceps and forearms (for punch retraction and gripping), upper back (for hugging and pulling).

JU-JITSU

Some styles of ju-jitsu actually do cover all ranges. The major muscle groups used are: thighs (for stance work and some kicking), hips (for throwing and some kicking), calves (footwork and stance work and lifting the body onto the toes for throwing), abdominals (turning the upper body and taking blows), inner pectorals (punching and blocking movements), front deltoids (blocking and punching), triceps (punching and some blocking), biceps and forearms (for punch retraction and gripping), upper back (for hugging and pulling).

WRESTLING AND JUDO

Judo and wrestling are limited to the grappling ranges, vertical and horizontal. As far as contact go they are totally real and often ferocious. The major muscle groups used are: thighs (for stance work and some leg chokes/strangles), hips (for throwing), calves (footwork and stance work and lifting the body onto the toes for throwing), abdominals (turning the upper body, taking blows and lifting the body in escapes), front deltoids (for jamming techniques), biceps and forearms (gripping/holding), upper back (for hugging and pulling), trapezius (for protecting the neck and throat from strangles and chokes).

AIKIDO

Aikido works on the premise that you use your opponent's strength and weight against them and that muscular strength is not used in the execution of technique, so I would recommend that the practitioner use weight for overall muscle strengthening covering all major muscle groups. I would also recommend that they read *Animal Day* for reasons that will be evident when the book is read.

CHAPTER FOUR
SAFETY FIRST

As with all aspects of training, safety is an important aspect, weight training being no different. Safety should be paramount at all times if accidents and injuries are to be avoided.

WARMING UP

Always warm up the muscles before engaging in a weight training session. Cold muscles are easily pulled and ripped (see next chapter on 'warm ups').

USING A SPOT (Training Partner)

A training partner, or spot, should be used when lifting, or training with weights, especially when using heavy weights. The training partner should 'spot' during the execution of an exercise and when necessary they should lift the weight on and off the bench press or rack for you and assist during the exercise if you are struggling to lift the weight. A spot is also good for offering encouragement during the exercise.

DRESSING CORRECTLY

Always wear loose fitting clothes that allow for muscle expansion when training with the weights. Men's tight trousers

and underpants are especially uncomfortable, even dangerous. They should be like a good dancing hall, 'loads of ball room'. Sturdy trainers with good floor grip are also important. Don't wear jewellery and make sure that long hair is tied up so that it cannot get caught in machinery in the gym. If and when necessary use a weightlifter's belt to support the back.

SECURING EQUIPMENT

Use collars to secure weights to the bar and dumb-bells so that they cannot fall on you, or anyone else, during the execution of the exercise. One of the most common accidents in the weights gym is weight discs falling from unsecured bar or dumb-bells on to toes. So beware and always secure the weights with collars.

SLOWLY DOES IT

From my experience people, especially those who train in other disciplines such as the martial arts, tend to rush into weight training in a bid to show how fit they are and to get fast gains in strength and lift. This is always a mistake. Take your time and start off with light weights and manageable routines. Don't be influenced by the weight and routine of

those around you, or your own ego; it is not a race or a competition.

Just do what is comfortable to start with and nothing more. Gently increase your weight week by week and month by month and if needed, your routine. If you do try to do too much at once it is possible that you may rip or damage the muscle and this will kill your appetite for weight training. Too much too soon will also leave you so sore that you will not be able to move, let alone train. All these things will defeat the object because it will affect the way you train in the combat system that you are trying to enhance.

WARM DOWN

To help lessen the chance of aching muscles, due to lactic acid left in the muscle after training, warm down with the exercises described at the end of this book.

CHAPTER FIVE
WARMING UP

You will be tempted to miss the warm up when you enter the gym, I always am. Don't do it. *Always* warm up the muscles so that they are ready for the trauma of a training session. Most injuries in training are caused by people who do not warm up. If you get into the habit of warming up it will become routine.

A good warm up will get the heart and lungs working to their optimum level aerobically, thoroughly warming up the body so that you do not strain any muscles. The following exercises will do the job admirably.

The warm up should consist of two parts:

1) Stretching
To lengthen your muscles, tendons and ligaments as much as possible to produce maximum flexibility.

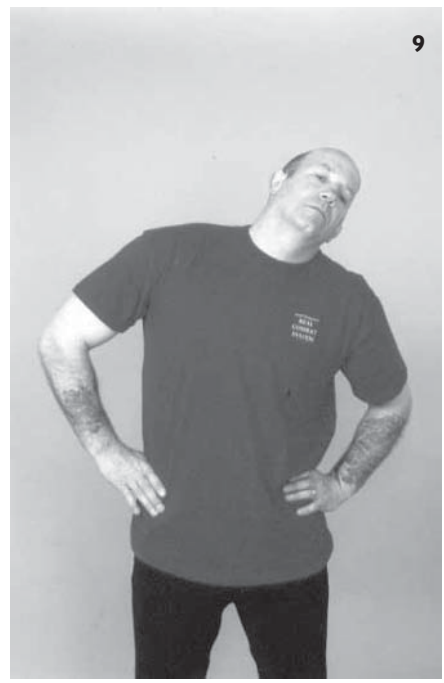
2) High Repetition
Aerobic exercise to get the heart and lungs working to increase the blood supply to the muscles.

When I warm up I try to work from the head down to the toes, so we will start with the neck.

1) NECK ROLLS

The neck and the shoulders are the repository of a lot of the body's tensions, so neck rolls are the first step toward physical relaxation. I find neck rolls especially important if you are going to practice any type of grappling discipline where the neck takes a lot of the strain.

Stand with your hands by your sides and breathe deeply, letting your shoulders, arms and whole body relax as much as possible. Let your head fall forward slowly until your chin touches your chest. This will gently stretch the back of the neck. Then rotate the head to your right and all the way around as though trying to get your right ear to touch your right shoulder. After completion of one rep do another four. Five reps in all. (Pic 9)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2) SIDE BENDS

This movement stretches the side of the body, especially the oblique muscles. Place your left arm by your left side and your right arm above your head, your legs shoulder width apart and straight (as illustrated). Bend to your left side and stretch gently, not bouncing, as far as you can comfortably go. At full stretch hold for the count of five seconds and then return slowly to the start position. Repeat for ten reps and then do the same to the opposite side of the body. (Pic 10)

3) TOUCHING THE TOES

This will stretch the back and the back leg muscles. Stand with feet shoulder width apart, hands in front and palms facing inward. Bend forward, trying to touch your fingertips on the floor without bending the legs. At full stretch hold for five seconds. Again, don't bounce, rather stretch gently. Return to start position and repeat for ten reps. (Pic 11)

4) HAMSTRING STRETCH

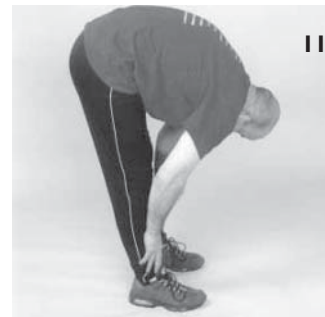
Stand with legs twice shoulder width and lean forward until the palms of the hands are on the floor in front of you. Turn to your left, grab your left ankle and hold for five seconds. Turn to the right side and repeat the same exercise to the right side, holding at full stretch for five seconds. Then return

back to the centre and repeat the same for ten reps each side. As with all stretching, do not bounce.
(Pic 12)

10

5) BACK STRETCH

Standing with the hands on the hips, feet shoulder width apart, lean the head back as though looking at the ceiling above you and gently stretch backwards, as though trying to look at the wall behind you. At full stretch hold for five seconds and return to start position. Repate the same movement for ten reps, each time trying to stretch a little further than the last.
(Pic 13)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6) INNER AND REVERSE THIGH STRETCH

From a squat position, back straight (as illustrated), extend your right leg to your right. Use your right hand to gently push your right knee towards the floor, thus stretching the inner/back thigh and calf muscle. At the same time use your left elbow to push out against the inside of your left knee, thus stretching the inner thigh of the opposite leg. Repeat for ten reps. (Pic 14)

To reverse, return to the squat position and extend the opposite (left) leg. Each rep should see you stretching the muscle a little more. Do not bounce or force the muscle.

7) LEGS APART – SEATED HAMSTRING STRETCH

Sit on the floor, legs astride and straight. Gently lean down towards your right side, grabbing your right ankle or foot to pull down, then move to the centre and stretch forward, trying to place your head or chest on the floor in front of you.

Then move across to your left side and lean forward, taking hold of your left ankle or foot and pulling down gently.

Alternate the exercise from left to right to centre, each rep trying to stretch a little further than the last. Thirty reps in total. Don't bounce or jerk. (Pic 15)

15

8) BOX SPLITS

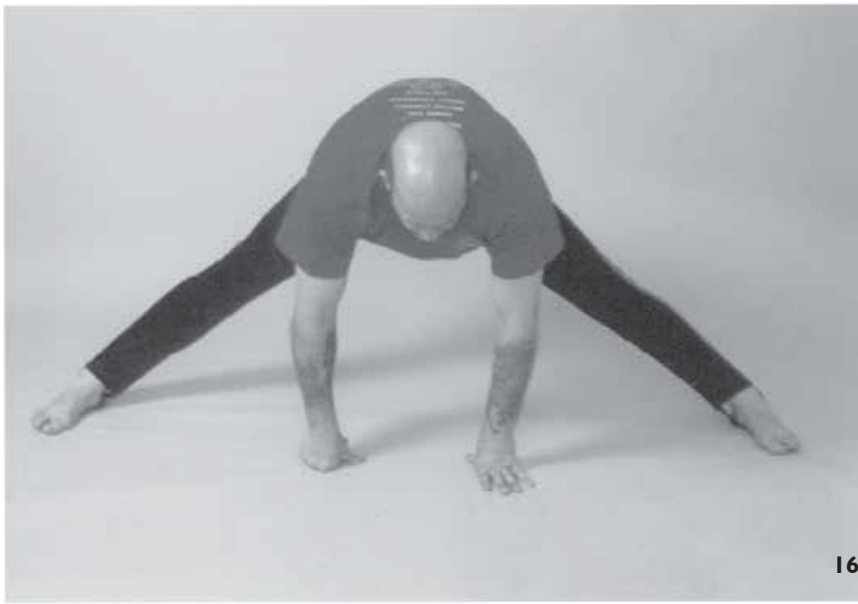
Stand with feet astride and legs straight. Slowly slide both feet in opposite directions and gently downwards. Keep your back straight. If you need to, place a chair or table in front of you to aid balance. When you reach your full stretch, hold for five seconds and then return to the start position. Repeat for ten reps. (Pic 16)

9) FRONT SPLITS

Facing your own right (left if practising the opposite side) legs astride with the hip committed to the right, both legs straight, slide the feet in opposite directions slowly and gently towards the front splits. When you reach your full potential hold the movement for five seconds and then return to the start position. Repeat for ten reps. Change to the left side and repeat the exercise. (Pic 17)

10) JOGGING ON THE SPOT

From a standing position begin running on the spot trying to lift each alternate knee as high as possible in front of you. Try to stay on the balls of the feet at all times during the exercise as landing on the heels may cause injury. As you continue to jog on the spot try to increase the speed and intensity of the exercise and try getting the knees higher and higher.



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17

CHAPTER SIX
ROUTINE ONE – KICKERS AND PUNCHERS

Routine One is more for the boxer/karate/tae-kwondo fighter, the punchers and kickers of the fighting arts, whereas Routine Two will be better suited to the grappling arts. If your art involves all ranges, and it should, then you could use both of the following routines, or a combination of the two.

I find it best to train two or three times a week on the weights, but never on consecutive days; this allows the worked muscle recuperation time.

Always do a five to ten minute warm up, as described in the last chapter, before lifting any weight, and warm down after finishing your session.

As a rule of thumb, use a weight that will allow 6-8 reps, building eventually to 12-15 reps. When you find that you are achieving 12-15 reps, add a little more weight to the bar and come back down to 6-8 reps. Follow all the normal safety

procedures: keep collars tight, have a spot for any exercise that might be a struggle and above all, *don't strain yourself*.

18a

Note that correct breathing is important when using the weights. Try to breathe in when the muscle extends and out when the muscle flexes.

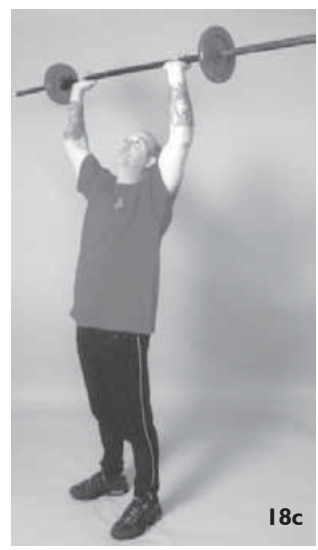
18b

The major muscle groups used in this routine are: hips, calves, abdominal muscles, inner pectorals, front deltoids (shoulders) and triceps.

1) 5-10 minute warm up.

2) CLEAN AND PRESS

A full clean, then press over the head is one rep. Put the bar down on the floor after every clean and press. Main muscles worked: legs, back, trapezius, deltoids, triceps. (Pic 18a,b&c)


18c

A clean is performed by standing close to the bar-bell, as illustrated, with the shins just about touching the bar. Grab the bar at about shoulder width and lift the bar by pushing with the legs as you pull with the arms. When the bar reaches shoulder height, flip the wrists over, so that the bar is resting across the upper chest at the level of the collarbones. From this position 'press' the bar over your head strongly, fully locking the elbows. Lower the weight back to the chest position and then back to the original start position, on the floor. Repeat the clean and press for 6-8 reps almost immediately.

Perform three sets of clean and press with one minute rest between sets (one set is the amount of reps performed in one go, usually between 6 and 15 repetitions of the movement).

Add a couple of reps a workout until you are achieving 12-15 reps per set, then add a little weight and drop back down to three sets of 6-8 reps.

3) FORTY-FIVE DEGREE INCLINE DUMB-BELL PRESS

Main muscles worked: upper and inner pectorals, front deltoids and triceps.

Lying on your back on an incline bench, a dumb-bell in each hand at upper chest/shoulder level, push the weights overhead then lower back to the start position on the chest/shoulders for one rep. Repeat the movement for three sets of 6-8 reps, increasing a few reps workout until you achieve 12-15 reps, then add weight and drop back down to 6-8 reps.
(Pic 19a&b)

19a

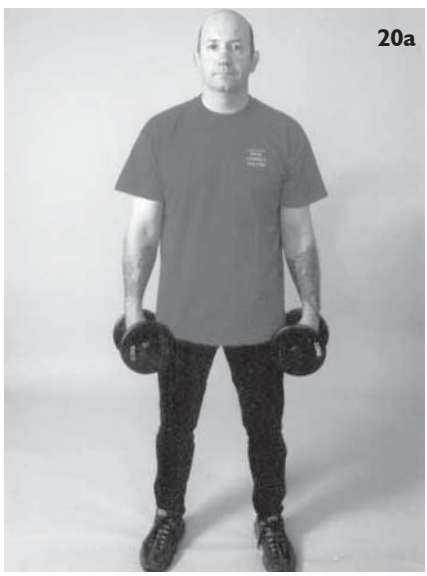
19b

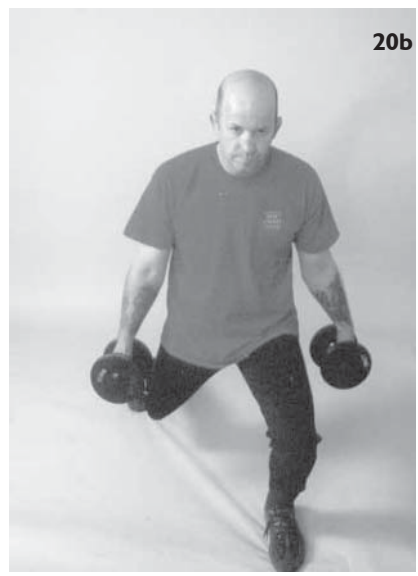
4) LUNGES

Main muscles worked: hips, thighs and calves.

Holding a dumb-bell in each hand, hanging at the sides of the body, take a long step forward with one foot, lowering the knee of the back leg, and bending the knee of the front leg. Come back to the starting position and repeat the movement with the opposite leg. This double step is one rep. (Pic 20a)

Repeat for three sets of 6-8 reps increasing over several workouts to 12-15 reps. When this is achieved add weight and decrease the reps back down to 6-8. (Pic 20b)


20a


20b

5) ALTERNATE DUMB-BELL CURL

21

Main muscles worked: biceps, forearms.

Stand with a dumb-bell in each hand, with the thumb end forward. Curl one hand to the shoulder turning the dumb-bell en route so that the palm side is upward. Return the dumb-bell to its start position at the same time as you begin to curl the opposite hand in the same manner. Both dumb-bells should meet at about halfway. This is one rep. Continue, alternating up and down, until you complete 6-8 reps for each arm. (Pic 21)

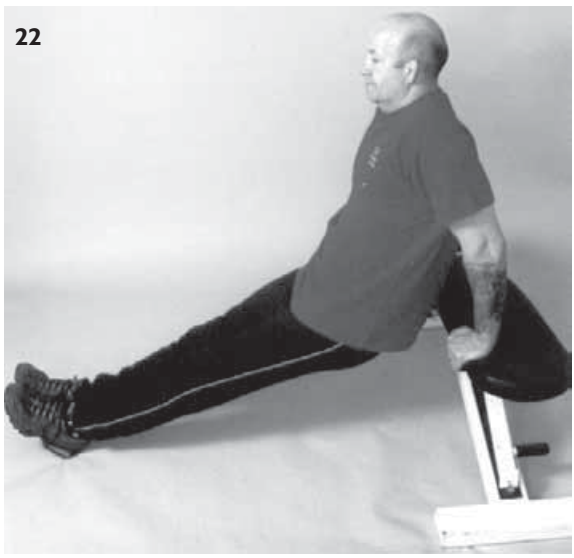
Repeat for three sets of 6-8 reps increasing over several workouts to 12-15 reps. When this is achieved add weight and decrease the reps back down to 6-8 reps.

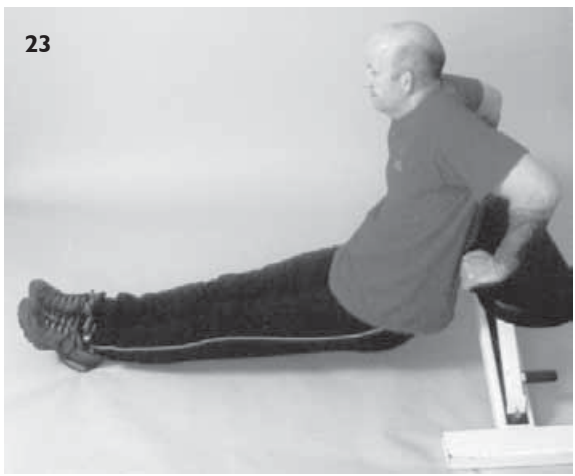
6) TRICEPS DIPS

Main muscles worked: triceps, shoulders and chest (a little).

For this exercise you need three chairs, boxes, benches or something similar. Place your heels on one of the boxes and your hands on the other two, as per illustration. You should be in a position similar to sitting on the floor with the legs straight out in front of you. Lower your bum as far as you

can, then push back to the start position with the strength of the triceps. This is one rep. (Pic 22&23)





Repeat for three sets of 6-8 reps, increasing over several workouts to 12-15 reps. When this is achieved, add weight and decrease the reps back down to 6-8 reps.

There are two ways of adding resistance to this exercise:

1) Have someone place a loose weight (disc) on your lap. This can be increased as the exercise becomes easier.

2) As you push back up from the flexed position, get someone to place a little pressure on your shoulders to add to the resistance.

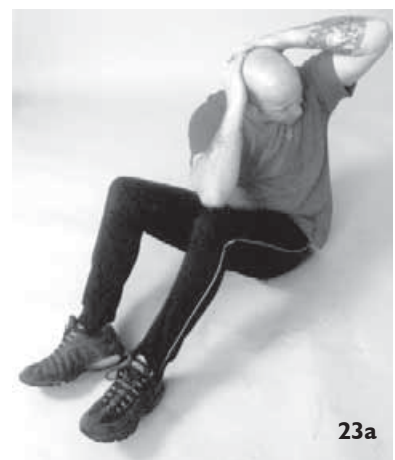
ABDOMINALS

Main muscles worked: abdominals/obliques.

To the bodybuilder the abs are for show; for the martial artist their use is threefold: for mobility, for support and for impact; being able to take a shot in the stomach. So on the abs we will do three exercises.

1) KNEE BENT TWISTING SIT-UPS

Anchor your feet, bend your knees and place your hands on your head, as illustrated. Sit up and touch your right knee with your left elbow, then lower to start position. This is one rep. Repeat the sit-up again, this time touching your left knee with



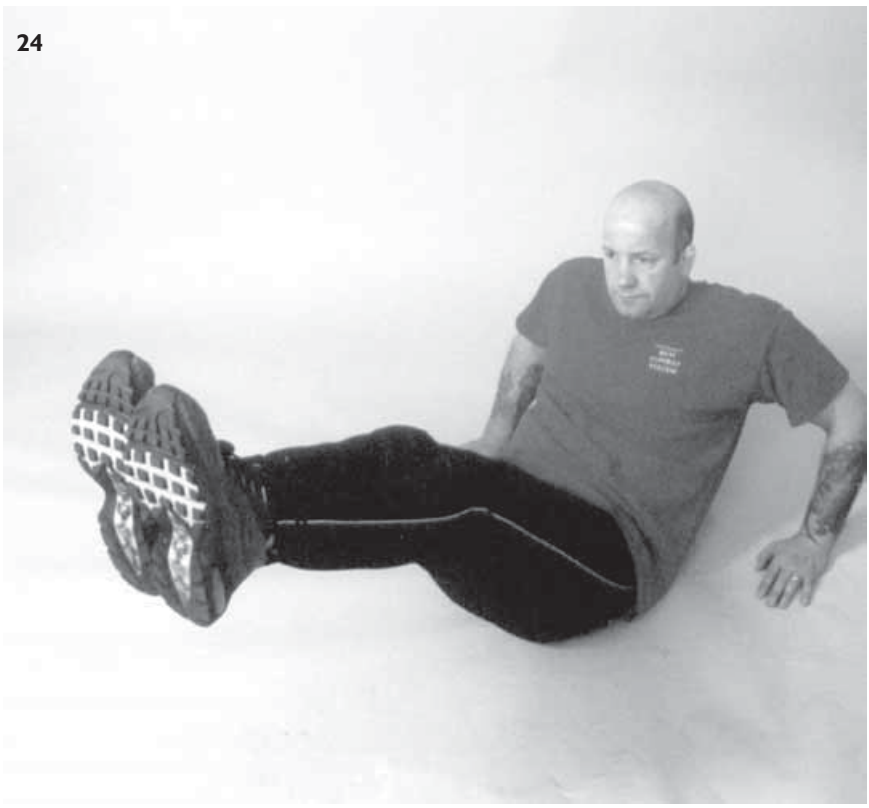
23a

your right elbow. Work up to two sets of fifty repetitions, then either increase resistance by doing the same exercise on an incline or by holding a weight behind your head, or on your chest as you sit up. (Pic 23a)

2) SEATED KNEE-INS

Sit on the edge of a chair or a bench, hold the side of the chair for support, with feet together, as illustrated. From this position pull the knees to the chest and then lower to the start position for one rep. Repeat the movement and work up to two sets of 50 reps. (Pic 24)

24



3) IMPACT

Lie on your back on the floor, bend the knees and lift the shoulders off the floor, enough to tense the abs. Get a partner to gently tap your belly with clenched fists. Be sure to start off gently.

Continue for 10-20 seconds. Slowly increase both the time and degree of impact until you can take one minute, with medium force.

TAKE CARE
NOTE: Professional boxers do this by dropping a medicine ball onto their tensed abs.

CAUTION: never strike a relaxed stomach.

This is the complete routine, the only thing that I'd recommend you add is neck work. The next routine, the grappler's workout, includes neck work and you could greatly benefit by its inclusion in your routine.

CHAPTER SEVEN
ROUTINE TWO – THE GRAPPLERS

Routine One was more for the boxer/karate/tae-kwondo fighter, the kickers and punchers of the fighting arts, whereas Routine Two is more suited to the grappling arts. As previously stated, if your art involves all ranges as it should, then you could use both routines, or a combination of the two.

As a practising grappler I have found this routine to be of the utmost benefit. It has greatly enhanced my grappling skills, not just with added strength to aid technique but also with extra stamina. Always do a five to ten minute warm up, as described in Chapter Five, before lifting any weight, and warm down after finishing your session.

As a rule of thumb, use a weight that will allow 6-8 reps, building eventually to 12-15 reps. When you find that you are achieving 12-15 reps, add a little more weight to the bar and come back down to 6-8 reps. Follow all the normal safety procedures: keep collars tight, have a spot for any exercise that might be a struggle and above all don't strain yourself.

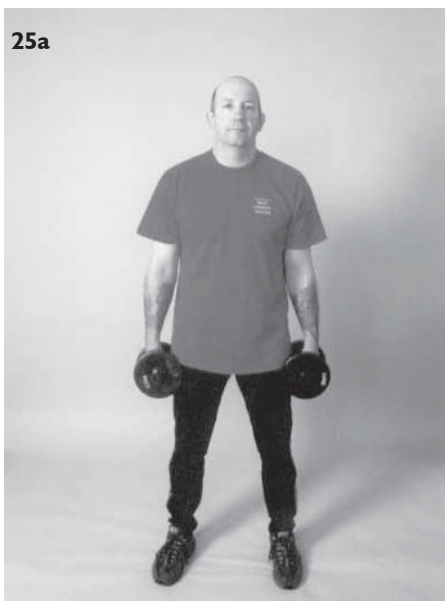
The major muscle groups used in this routine are: biceps, upper-back, forearms, hips, thighs and shoulders.

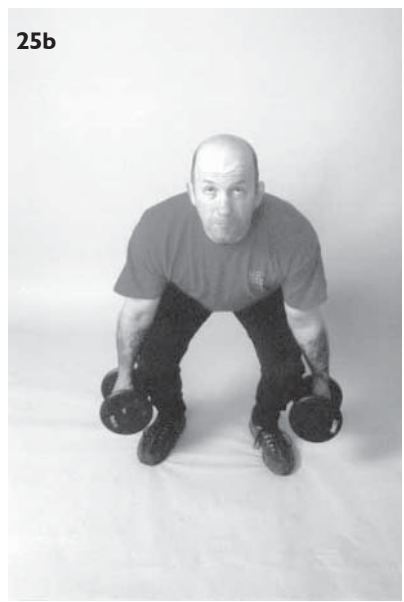
1) 5-10 minute warm-up.

2) WIDE STANCE SQUATS

Main muscles used: thighs, hips, gripping muscles.

Hold a pair of heavy dumb-bells and stand with feet about 18 inches to 2 feet apart. Squat down until the dumb-bells touch the floor, then return to the start position. This is one rep. Repeat for three sets of 12 reps, eventually working up to three sets of 20 reps. When this is achieved, increase the weight and drop the reps back down to 12. (Pic 25a&b)

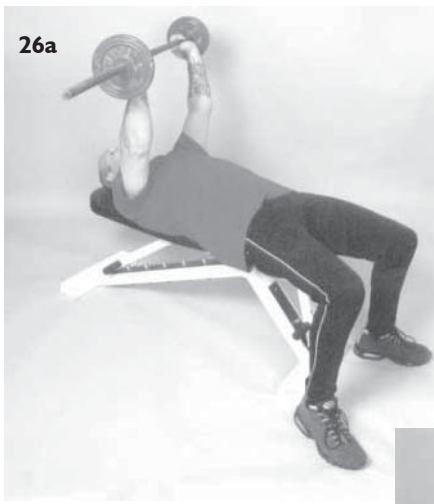

25a

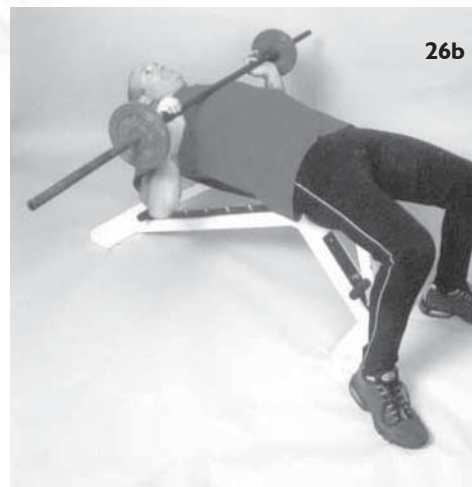

25b

3) WIDE GRIP BENCH PRESS

Main muscles used: pectorals, front shoulders, triceps.

Lie on your back on a bench and hold the bar-bell 'collar-to-collar', as per illustration. Lower the bar to your chest and then push back to arm's length, the start position. This is one rep. Repeat the exercise for three sets of 12 reps building up to three sets of 20 reps, increasing the weight and lowering the reps, as previously described. (Pic 26a&b)


26a


26b

4) POWER CLEANS

Main muscles used: all upper back, hips, grip, lats.

Use a fairly heavy bar, grip it at shoulder width, shins touching the bar, as per illustration. Pull the bar fast from the floor, flipping the bar onto the front shoulders (collarbone level) as you come upright. Lower back to the start position. This is one rep. Repeat the movement at a fairly fast pace for three sets of 6-8 reps working up to three sets of 12-15 reps, increasing poundage and decreasing reps accordingly.
(Pic 27a&b)

27a

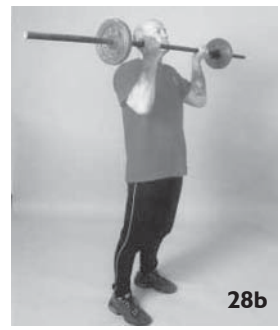
27b

5) BAR-BELL CURLS – BASIC AND HEAVY

Main muscles used: biceps and forearms for grip.

Curl the bar at shoulder width grip from the thighs to the chest and back down again. This is one rep. Use a 'loose' style with a bit of body swing on the last couple of reps, if needed. Repeat for five sets of 8 reps, building to five sets of 15 reps, increasing poundage and decreasing reps accordingly. (Pic 28a&b)

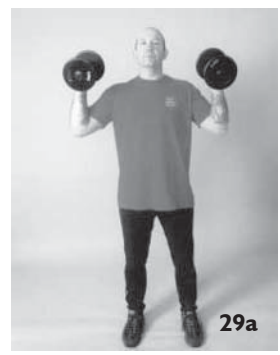
28a

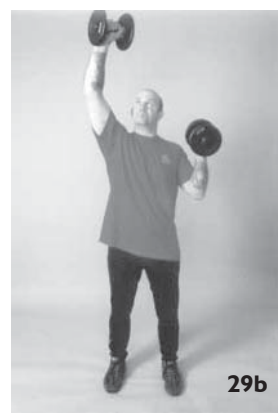

28b

6) ALTERNATE DUMB-BELL PRESS – STANDING OR SEATED

Main muscles used: deltoids, triceps.

Hold a dumb-bell in each hand at shoulder height, as per illustration. Push the dumb-bells over the head alternately (one at a time) getting a nice rhythm going. Up and down with both arms being one rep. Repeat for three sets of 12 reps building to three sets of 20 reps, increasing poundage and decreasing reps accordingly. (Pic 29a&b)


29a


29b

7) TWO-MINUTE NECK WORK

Main muscle worked: neck.

Use your hands to provide gentle resistance as you twist and turn your head in all directions. Be careful though; it is very easy to pull the neck muscles. This is achieved in the same way as rolling the head, as in the warm up, using your hands to apply a little pressure to the exercise.

8) HEAD CRAB

Main muscles used: neck and trapezius.

Lie on your back on the ground and make a crab position. Lower your head until it is resting on the mat, as per illustration, still using the hands for support. Gently rock back and forward and side to side, on the head. Use the hands to keep some of the bodyweight off the head. As the neck becomes stronger, use the hands less and less until you are performing the exercise without any support from the hands at all.

(Pic 30)

30

This is a very difficult exercise and should be practised with great caution. Neck muscles are easy to pull so be *careful*. This exercise is of five minutes duration.

9) ABDOMINALS

Main muscle used: abs.

For the martial artist, stomach muscles are not for show; their use is for more practical reasons – for mobility, support and impact, being able to take a shot in the stomach. So for the abs we will do three exercises.

(i) KNEE BENT TWISTING SIT-UPS

Anchor your feet, bend your knees and place your hands on your head, as per illustration. Sit up and touch your right knee with your left elbow, lower to start position. This is one rep. Repeat the sit-up again, this time touching your left knee with your right elbow. Work up to two sets of 50 repetitions, then either increase resistance by doing the same exercise on an incline or by holding a weight behind your head, or on your chest as you sit up.

(ii) SEATED KNEE-INS

Sit on the edge of a chair or a bench, holding the sides for support and with feet together, as illustrated. From this position pull the knees to the chest and lower to the start position for one rep. Repeat the movement and work up to two sets of 50 reps.

(iii) IMPACT

Lie on your back on the floor, bend the knees and lift the shoulders off the floor, enough to tense the abs. Get a partner to tap your belly gently with clenched fists.

Continue for 10-20 seconds. Slowly increase both the time and degree of impact until you can take one minute, with medium force.

Remember: never strike a relaxed stomach.

This is the end of Routine Two. As I said before, if you intend your art to be an effective one in a street scenario it should include all ranges and all concepts. Every system should include kicking, punching and grappling ranges. If it doesn't, it

cannot be classed as a comprehensive or completely effective system.

In my opinion and contrary to popular belief, there isn't a system that is so effective in its main range that it does not need to practice other ranges. Many practitioners say that their system of kicking and striking is so effective that they don't need to learn the grappling range because they will never end up on the floor. With respect, that is, at best, naïve. What I am trying to say here, in a rather long-winded manner, is that if you do include all ranges within your system, then use both routines, or a combination of the exercises in the two.

Also worth a mention is the fact that there are a myriad of exercises besides these that can be used to train the major muscles related to your art; you don't just have to do the ones here. What I do recommend though, is that you use these routines until you become very familiar with the weights, then, if you want to change the exercises, reps, sets or routines, by all means do so. Variety is the spice of life as they say. Try, though, not to detract from the main aim of weights for the martial artist: you are not training for a beach

physique, or a weight or power lifting contest. Weight training is an addition.

Treat the gym as a place of learning; study those around you and the exercises that they are practising. You may find as you train in the weights' gym, that others are working on different exercises to you. Make a mental note of these exercises and their functions (ask the instructor or even the other people in the gym if you are not sure) and, if and when you are ready, include them in your own routine, or replace some of your own exercises with the new ones. Make sure though that they relate to your art, otherwise you will be defeating the object.

If you are ever unsure of what you are doing, or you need advice, ask the resident gym instructor.

CHAPTER EIGHT
RÉSUMÉ

Here is a résumé of the two routines.

ROUTINE ONE:
KICKERS AND PUNCHERS

1) **WARM UP:**
   5-10 minutes.

2) **CLEAN AND PRESS:**
   Three sets of 6-8 reps to three sets of 12-15 reps.

3) **INCLINE DUMB-BELL PRESS:**
   Three sets of 6-8 reps to three sets of 12-15 reps.

4) **LUNGES:**
   Three sets of 6-8 reps to three sets of 12-15 reps each leg.

5) **ALTERNATE DUMB-BELL CURLS:**
   Three sets of 6-8 reps to three sets of 12-15 reps.

6) **TRICEPS DIPS:**
   Three sets of 6-8 reps to three sets of 12-15 reps.

7) **TWISTING SIT-UPS:**
   Two sets of up to 50 reps.

8) **SEATED KNEE-INS:**
Two sets of up to 50 reps.

9) **IMPACT TRAINING:**
Ten seconds to one minute of light to medium impact.

10) **WARM DOWN:**
(Detailed in later chapter).

ROUTINE TWO: THE GRAPPLERS

1) **WARM UP:**
5-10 minutes.

2) **DUMB-BELL SQUATS:**
Three sets of 12 reps to three sets of 20 reps.

3) **WIDE GRIP BENCH PRESS:**
Three sets of 12 reps to three sets of 20 reps.

4) **POWER CLEANS:**
Three sets of 6-8 reps to three sets of 12-15 reps.

5) **BAR-BELL CURLS:**
Five sets of 8 reps to five sets of 15 reps.

6) **ALTERNATE DUMB-BELL PRESS:**
Three sets of 12 reps to three sets of 20 reps.

7) **NECK WORK:**
Two minutes.

8) **HEAD CRABS:**
Up to five minutes.

9) **TWISTING SIT UPS:**
Two sets of up to 50 reps.

10) **SEATED KNEE-INS:**
Two sets of up to 50 reps.

11) **IMPACT TRAINING:**
Ten seconds to one minute of light to medium impact.

12) **WARM DOWN:**
(Detailed in later chapter).

CHAPTER NINE
WARMING DOWN

The following exercises should be performed directly after finishing on the weights, whilst the muscles are still warm and pumped. This will help stretch the muscles for flexibility, get rid of any lactic acid remaining in the muscle after exertion and also act as a relaxing aid. Warming down should be gentle and therefore therapeutic after a hard workout.

1) HAMSTRING STRETCHES

Stand with the feet together and legs locked straight. Bend forward from the waist. Grab hold of your ankles (or simply touch your toes) and gently pull down to your maximum stretch. Hold for a couple of seconds and then return to the start position. One set of ten reps. (Pic 33)

33

2) LEGS APART – HAMSTRING STRETCHES

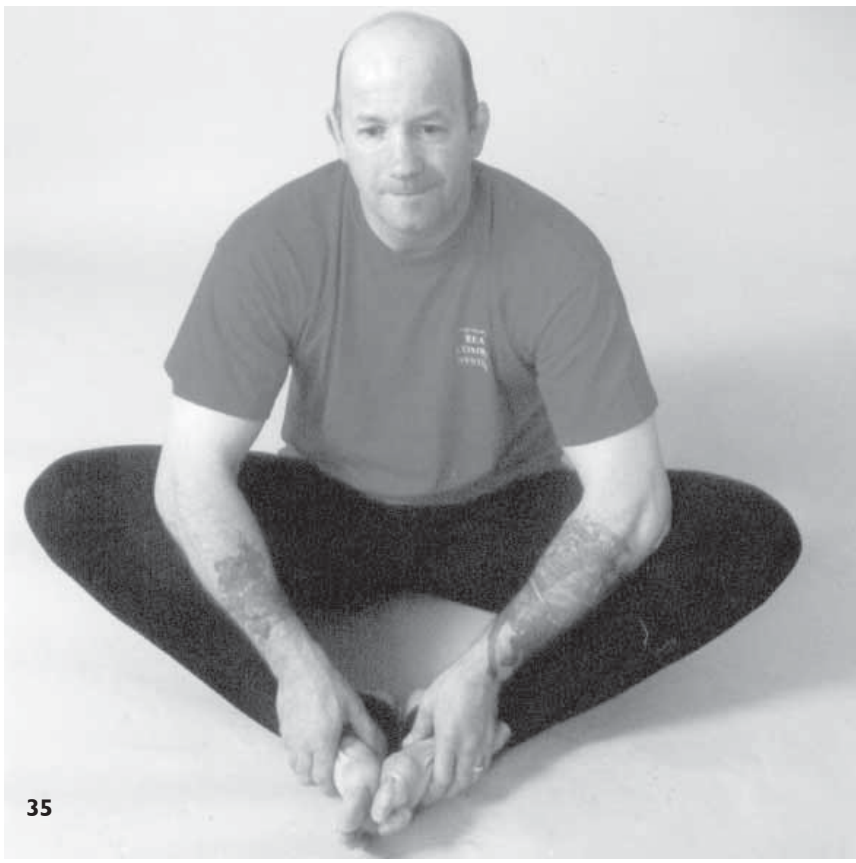
Sit on the floor, legs astride and straight. Gently lean down toward your right side, grabbing your right ankle or foot to pull down, then move to the centre and stretch forward, trying to place your head or chest on the floor in front of you. Then move across to your left side and lean forward, taking hold of your left ankle or foot and pull down gently. (Pic 34)

34

Alternate the exercise from left to right to centre, each rep trying to stretch a little further than the last. Don't bounce or jerk. Ten reps each side and centre.

3) INNER THIGH STRETCHES

Sit on the floor and draw your legs together so that the soles of the feet touch. Hold on to your feet and lower your knees to either side as far as you can. Use your arms or elbows to place gentle pressure on your legs and so get the fullest possible stretch. At maximum stretch hold for five seconds then release. Repeat the exercise for ten reps. (Pic 35)



35

4) QUAD STRETCH

From a kneeling position sit back gently between your own ankles, as illustrated, then lie back as far as you can. At full stretch hold for 3-5 seconds and then return to the start position and repeat the exercise for ten reps, each time trying to stretch a little further than the last. (Pic 36)

36

5) HURDLE STRETCH

Sit in the hurdle position, as illustrated, and gently stretch forward, grabbing the right ankle or foot (left if sitting the opposite way) and pull gently forward. Then lean over to your left and stretch between your legs, then to your right and stretch to your rear leg. Repeat front, centre and rear for ten reps each, trying gently to stretch a little deeper with each subsequent rep. (Pic 37)

6) SHAKING IT OFF

From a standing position, gently shake all of the limbs in turn from the head to the ankles.

CHAPTER TEN
THINGS TO AVOID

As with all endeavours there are things to remember and there are things to avoid. The next two chapters are dedicated to these tangible and intangible points.

1) A lot of martial arts types use punching with weights as an exercise, believing it to increase punching power, such as punching with dumb-bells. It doesn't because:

• The main upper body muscles used in correct punching are oblique muscles, abdominals, pectorals and triceps. The anterior (front) deltoids are only used in a very minor way.

• When you punch with a weight, gravity tries to pull the weight down to the floor. This isn't in the line of the resistance used in punching technique.

• So punching with a weight is not to be advised because it will develop the wrong muscles.

2) Try not to overdevelop the latissimus dorsi (lats) and certainly do not become a 'lat spreader'; you'll have seen this pose in the muscle magazines and bodybuilding contests. It may look great on stage but it pushes the arms away from the sides of your body in an unnatural manner and this limits certain combative movement.

3) When training the thighs by doing leg presses, squats etc., try to keep the reps high as opposed to low, up to 20 reps. Martial artists use both dynamic (moving strength) and static power (stances). Heavy quads, as brought on by heavy leg training with low reps, may interfere with mobility.

4) Keep your weight training in context. The weights have a habit of seducing people away from their main aim, in this case, aiding our combat training. They become obsessed with size, strength and physique and the weight training becomes more important to them than the combat art that they are training in.

I have lost count of the number of people I know personally who have gone in to weight training for added strength or bodyweight and have become seduced, packing in their

combat art in a bid to get big. Some, probably most, see big as synonymous with hard. Let me tell you that big is not in the biceps, it is in the mind. This is not to decry people that train with weights, I have a lot of admiration for anyone that trains, full stop, it is just to say that MASSIVE is a mental concept and not a physical one, so don't be seduced.

As a matter of fact, all the people that I know, with one exception, that left the martial arts for the weights, returned later when they realised the truth in what I have just said.

5) Don't become a 'water boy'. That is, don't take banned substances. There is obviously a lot of politics about the use of steroids and I don't want to go into that now. Only to say that steroids are detrimental to good health and people are dying through the misuse of them. Steroids are a banned substance from sport. If you use them you are cheating not only your art but also your body, and worst of all yourself. You can make excuses all day long about how steroids 'are all right in moderation' and how you are only going to take one course but at the end of the day they are unhealthy, so don't be a fool or a cheat. Stay natural. What we are training for is health; anything that detracts from that should be bypassed.

6) Don't become overconfident. I don't like to say it but, whilst training with the weights does develop confidence, this being a good thing, it is also a breeding ground for arrogance, a by-product of overconfidence. Confidence and overconfidence are but a hair width apart. Overconfidence is a negative by-product, sometimes of the weights but moreover of the steroids. Look out for it lest it creep up on you whilst you are unawares. Get strong – stay respectful.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
THINGS TO REMEMBER

1) It is quite difficult to be a top combat man and a top bodybuilder at the same time. When you talk about this combination people often bring up the name Terry O'Neill because he seems to combine them very well. Although Terry has a terrific physique, it is only for the last four or five years that he has been physique orientated. At about three stone bodyweight lighter Terry fought and beat the world's best in karate and the world's worst in society.

2) The super cuts of the bodybuilder reduce the body's impact ability. A little fat covering the body can provide cushioning against heavy blows, not enough to flap and wobble, but perhaps half a stone (7lb) spread over the whole of the body has many benefits.

3) A 20-inch arm is not necessarily any stronger than a 17-inch arm, neither is there a guarantee that it will punch any harder. Rocky Marciano's arms were 16.5 inches and as we all know he could punch a bit. Most of the power in a punch (or a kick) comes from how the technique is delivered as

opposed to how big the limb is. Some of the strongest punchers that I have ever worked with only weighed 9-10 stone with very small bicep measurements.

4) A lot of the top, pro boxers do not have showy abs and they take punches to the body all day long. As I said before, a cut stomach is not always the sign of a strong stomach.

5) If you don't train hard, don't expect to get results. Many people go to the gym and wander from exercise to exercise without breaking into a sweat, then after 12 months they complain that the weights haven't done anything for them. That's because they haven't done any real training. If you work hard you'll get the results; it's as simple as that.

CHAPTER TWELVE
DIET

Diet is not just an important part of training with the weights, it is an important part of any training regime.

You are only as good as the food you eat and if you want the best out of your body then it stands to reason that you should put the best into it. It has never ceased to amaze me in my years of training, the amount of people that do not follow a good diet and then wonder why they get no results, are always tired and run down. Probably as much as 75 per cent of training is in the diet, and yet people still neglect it.

I know what food works for me and what food does not, but diet is not my specialised subject so I will not go into great detail here, only to tell you what food the body needs. Personal needs vary also: you may want to lose weight, gain weight, lose fat, gain muscle or just add healthy bodyweight. You may have a fast metabolic rate, you may have a slow metabolic rate, and you probably have a preference for certain types of food. Some foods will perhaps not respond for you as they would for others and vice-versa. There are many

variables that need specialised attention. I recommend that you see a dietician about what food is best for you and what you want to achieve.

The main aims of a healthy diet are to reduce your fat and sugar intake. That means cutting right down on: fried foods, cream, butter, red meat, chocolate, cakes, biscuits, pastries, sweetened fruit juices, fizzy drinks and sweets. Increase all the foods with low fat, high carbohydrates, protein and fibre: chicken, oily fish, milk, fresh fruit, vegetables, beans, brown rice, wholemeal bread and pasta. Try to keep your alcohol intake down to the recommended 14 units a week for women, and 21 for men.

The basic ingredients in a good health diet should include:

PROTEIN

Protein is essential for the repair of muscle tissue which is torn or broken down in every training session. The whole body is made up of protein.

Protein can be found in most foods, specifically fish, chicken, meat and dairy products (eggs, cheese, milk etc.). Cheese

has a high vitamin, mineral and protein content, and although a little high in fat, helps to provide high energy levels.

FIBRE

Beans and bran provide the fibre needed in a healthy diet, and also help to prevent the digestive system becoming sluggish.

CARBOHYDRATE

Carbs are the body's first choice fuel, needed for the essential energy of a training session and everyday living. Carbs are abundant in fruit, pasta, baked potatoes and rice. I especially find bananas an excellent source of carbs.

VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Vitamins and minerals are pivotal in the breaking down of protein, carbs and calories into the system for easy utilisation for the working body. If the food is not properly digested it cannot be used by the body and just leaves as waste.

Vitamins and minerals can be found in most health foods, especially fruit and vegetables. Vitamin and mineral supplements are also excellent back-ups.

CALORIES

Calories are needed for the maintenance of bodyweight and also act as a secondary fuel to carbs. They can be found in almost everything that you eat, in varying degrees. Calorie intake can be adjusted to alter bodyweight, up or down.

Take my advice and be very conscientious about what you eat: you don't have to be a biochemist to eat healthily, just sensible. If you are not sure what is and is not healthy then take professional advice.

EPILOGUE

So there it is, another addition to your training routine. If you conscientiously adhere to the exercises you will add tremendous raw power to your technique, strength to your response, and a great muscular armour. Training with the weights will give you a tremendous feeling of wellbeing. It also gives a much needed change from normal routine. I have always used the weights, and God willing, I always will. They have helped me immeasurably and they can help you too.

As a result of training with the weights, as well as all the other benefits formerly mentioned, I have managed to avoid some serious injuries that would have surely occurred if my muscles had not been up to strength. There have also been times in my job as a nightclub doorman, when the raw strength developed by working with weights has pulled me through against difficult, often impossible odds.

One benefit often missed with the weights is the control of the inner opponent, the inner voice that feeds you with negative thoughts. To put yourself through the pain of a hard session on the weights you have to learn self-control, control over the inner opponent. It is the inner opponent, that

negative voice of ill reason at the back of our minds, that stops most people achieving their goals in life. So more control, via the weights, over the inner opponent has got to be a good thing.

Last, but not least, a nice by-product of working in progressive training is a good looking physique. It endears you to others and helps tremendously with increasing your self-esteem. Confident people are successful people, just beware and do not let that healthy confidence spill over into arrogant overconfidence.

I sincerely believe that you can make anything you want from your life, you can live your dreams. Whatever the mind of man can conceive he can achieve, so whatever it is that you want from life, go and get it. This is not a rehearsal, we have but one chance and we have absolutely no idea how long that chance is going to last. It could all end tomorrow, so make the best of today and live now. Use weight and combat training to help you achieve those very attainable goals.

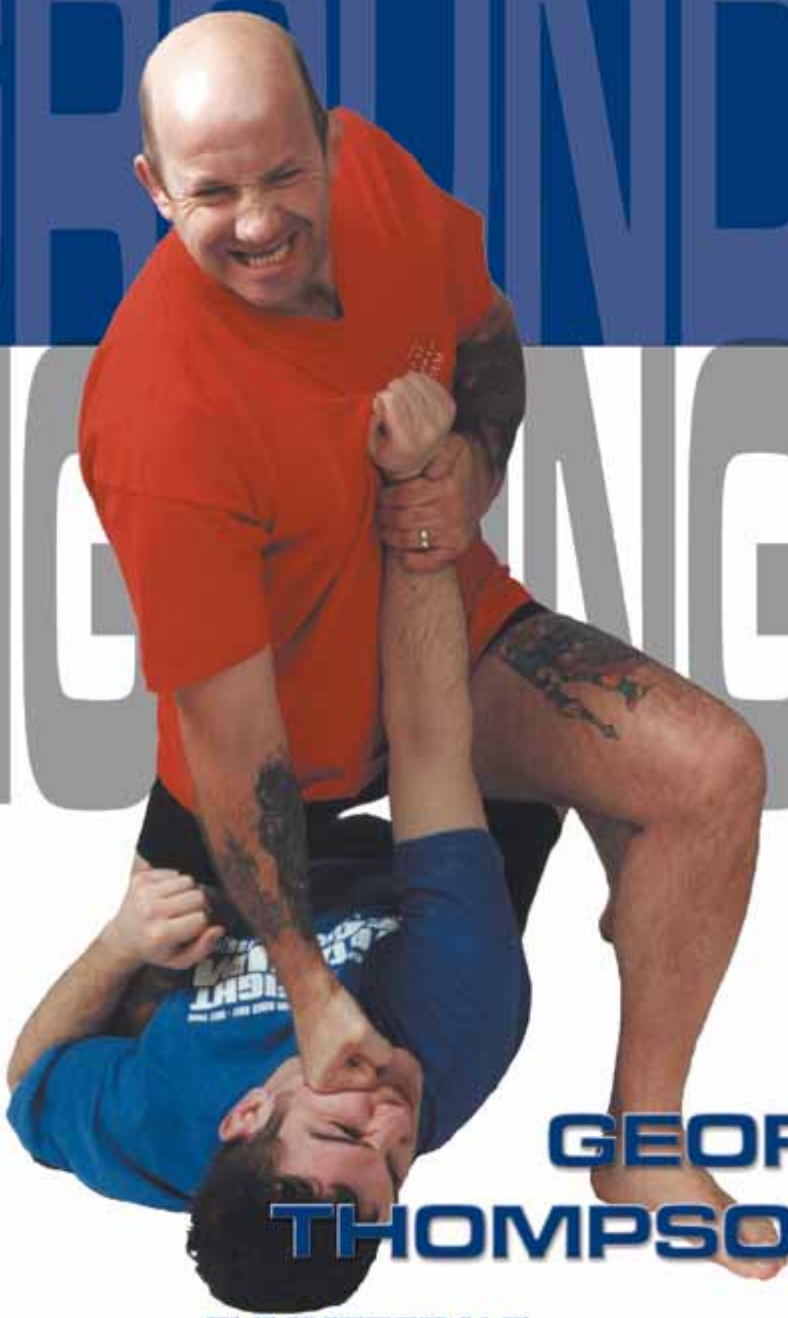
God bless.

Geoff Thompson
Coventry England 2001

GEOFF THOMPSON'S GROUND FIGHTING SERIES

PINS: THE BEDROCK

GROUND FIGHTING



GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

First published 1996.

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Important note

With ground fighting techniques the author recommends that you practice only under supervision to avoid accidents and always employ the 'tap system' in practice (if you want to submit or a technique is too painful or you wish to stop practice at any time tap the mat, tap yourself or your opponent with your hand or foot; if this is not possible just say to your opponent 'tap'). If an opponent taps out it is imperative that you release your hold immediately or suffer the consequence of what might be serious injury, and remember, what goes around comes around. If you do not release when he taps he may not release the next time you tap.

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

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Introduction

As I sit and write this text about Ground Fighting, I fondly look back on nearly 25 wonderful years of training in the martial arts, about 15 of those years as the instructor of one of the best, certainly toughest and definitely friendliest clubs in Great Britain.

Sadly, only yesterday I taught my last lesson to what was only a spattering of loyal students. It was a sad day for me with only a handful of people around me, whom I had grown to love and respect, there to see the end.

For the last 15 years I have put my heart and soul into my club only to see, on this final day, the emaciated remnants of what was once a feared battle ground where strong characters were tempered and the faint of heart feared to tread.

I won't go on about it, that's not what you have bought this book to read about, only to say that . . . well . . . there's nothing much more to say really, other than the fact that, for me it's the end of an era.

Many people have written, or spoken to me over the years about coming to Coventry to train at my master class but for whatever reason few seemed to make it so I decided to write a series of books and put together a series of videos on the type of lessons one could expect to receive had the journey been made.

The series is now even more apt because I no longer have a club and, unless you manage to make it down to one of the few seminars that I teach each year, this will be the only way you'll get to train with me.

With this in mind I write, as I taught, only about the things I actually train in myself. I will not, I can assure you, use superfluous technique to fill a book. There will be different genres of book according to the range/ryu that I am writing about, this series being the wonderful and exciting ground fighting range.

When you consider the fact that 95% of all fights go to ground and yet probably only 5% of martial artists are adequately prepared, or address ground fighting, something seems acutely amiss.

Hopefully this series will redress the balance and prepare the latter, whilst at the same time adding information and knowledge to the curriculum of those that are already in the know.

I have to say, that of all the systems that I have studied over the years ground fighting has been the most in-depth and demanding, though by its outer shell it may not appear so; only the very strong will go the full course and become proficient.

I have been lucky enough to train in several systems that incorporate ground fighting as their main range, Judo, Ju-Jitsu, Wrestling etc, and whilst all are very strong each has its own particular weakness. What I intend to do with these books is include the best of these systems and add, where appropriate, the now illegal techniques that were banned to make them safer to practice or more commercially, socially, Olympically acceptable.

I have no love for sport budo - though I do admire the great sports men that we have produced in this country - and I am not worried about being commercially or socially acceptable - I'll paint it as I see it.

I know from experience that it is the 'illegal', ugly techniques that make a system potent and workable in a society that no longer holds the martial artist in any esteem.

Whilst I am a great grappling fan and firmly believe that the grappler is potentate when rules are not in play, I have to state categorically that the ground is still the last place to be in a real fight. If you are in a match fight, as opposed to a 3 second fight or an ambush fight, the ground can be a safe option because you only have the one opponent to deal with.

However, match fighting is a lost art that only the very courageous seek; the enemy of today is a cowardly team fighter who works under the umbrella of deception, and whilst you might be capable of eating him alive on the ground it doesn't stop his mates kicking your face in or his girl friend stabbing you whilst your hands are tied up with your prostrate opponent.

A good puncher, one who understands the enemy and understands himself, will finish 95% of his fights from punching range and will be at home having his supper when his opponent is still coming around in some puddle in suburbia.

Having said that, some of the best punchers on the planet still end up on the floor because they do not understand enough about themselves or their enemy (see 3 Second Fighter) to employ their punching prowess to good effect. The kickers, unfortunately, fare even worse and end up on their backs more than the only whore in a town full of sex starved men on pay day.

Having pointed out the weaknesses of going to ground, I think it's important to point out that the confidence one develops from fighting on the ground is second to none. After all, the worst case scenario in a real fight is ending up on the floor; if you are good at fighting from the floor you become more confident and committed in the vertical ranges because, if you do find worst case scenario and the fight hits the deck, so what, you're good there too.

I believe that ground fighting will find a re-birth and people will realise what I have been saying for the last 15 years, that if you can't fight on the ground then you are not a complete fighter.

For those that are perceptive enough to see that this series of books will be of enormous help, they will teach you that anyone can be beaten on the ground, big or small, as long as you have

the knowledge. Most fighters run out of steam very quickly in a real fight, especially when it hits the ground, and what may have been a vertical monster is often a horizontal mouse. How you hit the floor is out of the context of this book, and series, though my books Real Grappling and Dead Or Alive cover a lot of good practical take downs. In this series we are dealing with what to do when you are down there.

There are different schools of thought about whether one should stay on the ground, once down, or get back up at the earliest opportunity. This depends largely on the circumstances and quite often you have no choice in the matter anyway. By strategically placing yourself in certain pins you do often have the opportunity to get back to your feet, and if that opportunity arises it is usually wise to snatch it with both hands, especially if you are dealing with more than one opponent.

The Match fight is slightly different - you are only fighting with one person and you may have taken him to the ground because he was too strong for you on his feet. If this is the case and he feels weaker on the ground then stay there and finish, there's no sense in letting a vertical monster back to his feet again. After all, if the guy is a hardened fighter he'll be glad to take the finishing kicks you throw just to get back to his feet again. Just

because you are vertical and he is horizontal is no guarantee of victory. As I said earlier, often the most frightening of opponents in vertical fighting is an absolute mouse on the floor because he has no experience of that range.

Look at the great white shark, the most feared killer of the seas, unequivocally the king of the deep waters - how do the deep sea divers deal with them? By using electrical waves that frighten the sharks and scare them away. The only reason it's effective is because the sensation is outside of the shark's experience and they do not know how to deal with it.

Taking a vertical fighter to the ground is, in effect, doing the same thing - taking them outside of their experience. One of my younger students, Matty, had a situation about one month ago with a very reputable street fighter from one of the rougher parts of Coventry. My student is 17 years old and about 11 stone, his opponent, P, was 26 and 15 and a half stone.

Matty was out with a couple of his friends when P approached and started an argument with them. They were all pretty scared because they knew this guy, he had a huge reputation as being a heavy weight in the area. P started bullying one of the lads

who didn't really want any trouble, when he tried to tell P this he got knocked out for his impertinence. Everyone stood back,

'ANY ONE ELSE WANT SOME?' P shouted, not expecting anyone to take him up on the challenge.

'Yeah, I'll have a bit,' replied Matty.

He'd been involved in several hundred animal day fights at my club and figured that it couldn't be any worse than that.

'You gotta be **cking joking, I'll kill ya',' came the bemused reply.

'Give it your best shot!' Matty said, stepping forward.

The fight was on.

A few punches were thrown and a clinch quickly ensued, as is the way with most match fights. Matty managed to reach P's leg and they tumbled to the ground where he held P in a tight scarf hold, for a few seconds P went crazy trying to escape the hold but he was held with a vice-like grip.

Matty could tell that P was tiring, in fact he was wheezing so much at one stage that Matty thought he had asthma. While he held P in the scarf hold Matty fired a couple of punches and head butts into his face and then jumped straight into the mount position (to be detailed later) where he continued to fire pummelling punches into P's face.

In a desperate bid to escape P turned over onto his belly, which is where Matty wanted him to turn, and Matty quickly wrapped a strangle around his neck. P struggled frantically for a couple of seconds before falling unconscious.

The whole fight lasted 10 seconds. After five minutes P came around, it was twenty minutes before he knew where he was and two weeks before he would venture out of his flat and show his face again.

The important thing in this true story is not so much the finish, although that is important, but rather it is the way that Matty, three stone lighter than his opponent, controlled his opponent with pins until he was ready for the finish.

That is what this first volume is about, perfecting the pins so that you can control the opponent right from the off. It would

be very easy at this point to rush off into the histrionics of advanced finishing techniques like strangles and bars but they are useless without the correct base of pinning techniques - please don't rush ahead and try to run before you can walk because, when the shit hits the fan and you find yourself in a real fight and on the ground, the finishing techniques will fail you because you have no foundation; so, don't put the gloss on your woodwork until you have rubbed it down and applied the primer, in this case, the pins.

What I'll do to start is isolate the main pins and then, later in the book, show you how to move around the body from one pin to another so that you can always work away from your opponent's strength and, eventually, move into a good finishing position. I will also detail how to defend and drill the pins. An excellent place to finish is the mount position and wherever you are on the ground the mount is always accessible.

When you first start practising the pins with a partner, do so with compliancy so that you can learn the correct technique. Once this has been attained practice full out, with no partner compliancy, so that you develop the correct muscles to defend the pin.

Pins: The Bedrock

Out of all the six books in this series, this one will be the most important, even though it may be the most basic, because it is the bedrock of everything else that you learn.

When you build a house it needs first and foremost to be on a firm foundation and your foundation with ground fighting is the pins.

Chapter One

The Mount Position

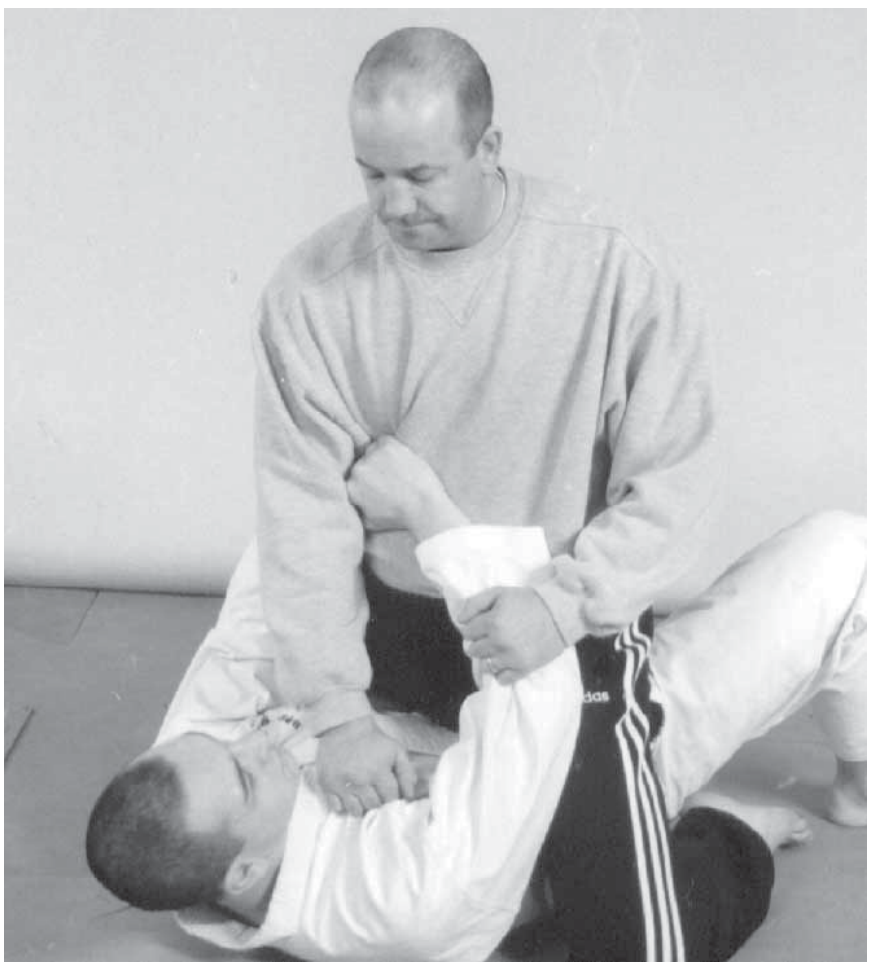
The mount is very often called the 'school boy position', because it's the position you always seemed to end up in when you fought in the school playground. As it is seen as synonymous with school boy fighting, it's devastating potency is often missed, and some (the uninitiated) even laugh at the mount as though it is infantile. These people have obviously never been below the mount or they would not be so quick to scoff. In my opinion it is probably the strongest and most powerful of all the pins, certainly once you have learned to defend it, and can be sought very quickly from all the other pinning positions.

From the mount one can finish with the 'bread and butter' punches and strikes or the intricate, and yet paradoxically simple, bars and chokes. You can either punch the opponent out or punch him until he turns onto his stomach and then choke him out. If he feeds you an arm as a means of defence to your blows, you can bar and break it off; if you so desire you are also in a very good position to get back to your feet, whilst your opponent is still horizontal, and finish with kicking/stamping techniques. You are also in the enviable position of being able

to punch your opponent whilst he cannot reach your face to punch back, and thus you have the leverage while he does not. Whilst it is conventional to mount on the opponent's belly you can also, if he turns slightly, mount him on his side, or if he turns completely mount him on his back.

These are the different mounts:

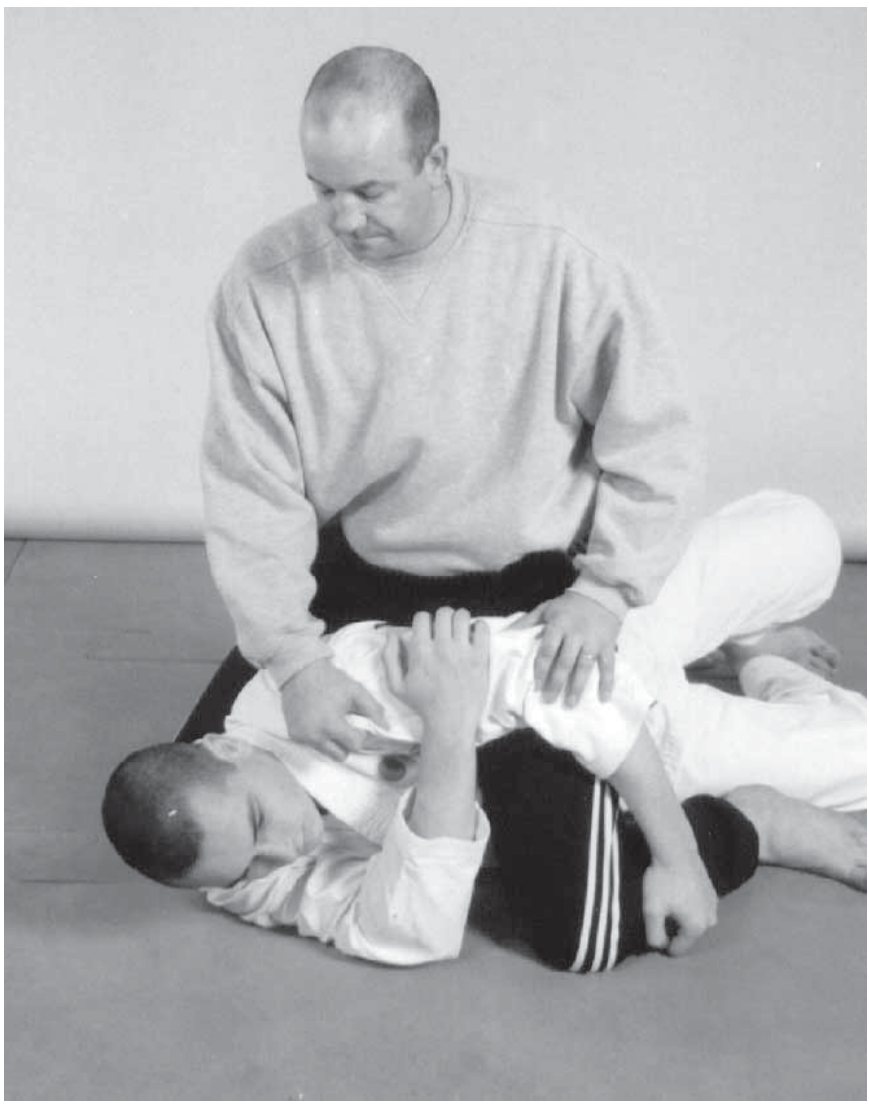
Belly Mount



Sit astride the opponent with your knees wide to spread your weight and thus make it harder for him to escape. You can either sit upright (a good punching position), or lean forward with your palms on the ground as base.

Side Mount

If the opponent turns slightly to his side you may mount his side. The opponent is far more open to attacking blows from here because his arms are redundant as defending tools. Again you may sit upright to attack or forward with your palms on the ground to base.



Back Mount

If the opponent turns completely onto his belly, usually in a bid to escape, you may mount his back, upright for attacking or forward for basing. From this position he is very vulnerable to attacks from your elbows and the finishing choke or strangle.

Pins: The Bedrock

Firstly, get as comfortable as possible with these positions, using partner compliancy to perfect technique. Once a comfort level has been found, move onto defending the mount. Usually (certainly for the first few seconds of taking up the mount, or any pin for that matter) the opponent will panic and start to buck and thrash in a bid to escape. You must expect this or you'll lose the pin as quick as you found it. He will get a surge of in-fight adrenalin (see Fear book) that, for a few seconds, will make him very strong, certainly strong enough to throw you from a strong to a vulnerable position.

Adrenalin is like a bodily turbo drive and whilst it will make him very strong for a few seconds it will also eat away his fuel at the same rate, so ride the storm until he is knackered - then he's just a punch bag. This is especially so when dealing with unfit fighters (most of them are very unfit). When I fight on the ground I often spark my opponent's in-fight adrenalin by inflicting pain- punch, bite, elbow, etc., in order to empty his fuel tanks. Beware though; if you use this ploy remember what you are doing and the effect that it may have: you're giving him a few seconds of dynamic energy that will throw you from your pin if you are not prepared for it. So remember to ride the storm until his fuel tanks are empty.

The most vulnerable time for a pin is when you first take it and when you go for a finish - these are the times that most people forget to defend their hold. The second that you put a pin on someone they will try to fight out of it, because their brain senses danger and releases in-fight adrenalin to assist. Similarly when you give an opponent pain his brain will release in-fight adrenalin to act as both anaesthesia to the pain and fuel to the escape, and it's the same thing when you go for a finish. His brain will sense that the end is near and initiate fight or flight that will enable him to buck and thrash ferociously for a few seconds. Rather than fight biceps against biceps, will against will, go with the flow and ride the opponent like a bucking horse, if you try to meet force with force you'll get as tired as he - and if he's stronger, you may lose.

Defending the Mount

There are two main positions from the mount (as illustrated), one used primarily as an attacking position and the other primarily as a defending position.

The attack position is high with the hands cocked ready to attack, the defence position low, almost lying on the opponent with your hands/arms spread out in front to use as a base. The hands and feet can be used to base out and stop the opponent escaping,

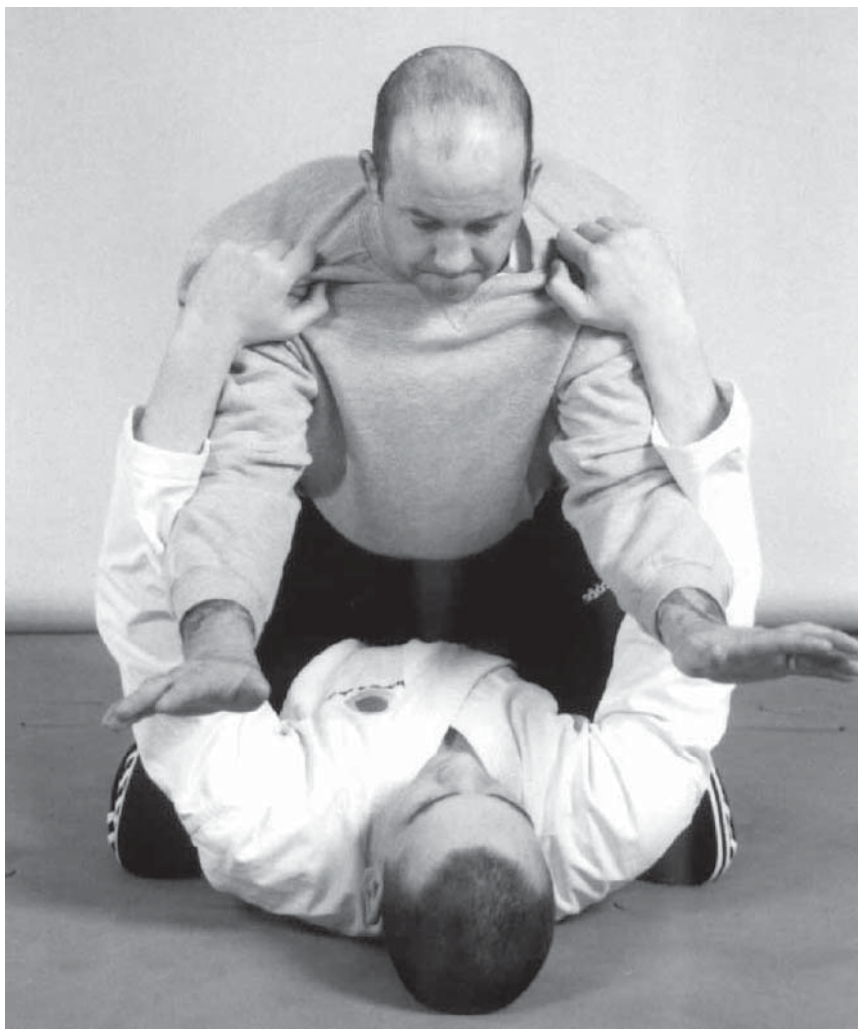
the hands directly to the side and in front, the feet directly to the side and behind. The feet may also be intertwined with the opponent's to further secure a good solid base. At any appropriate time in the mount the head, teeth, elbow, etc., can be used to attack and finish (or turn) the mounted opponent. Again, this is real bread and butter stuff and should be perfected before moving on to more technical finishes.

The following are techniques to help you defend the mount. You need no partner compliancy here though you can start at 50% (the person under the mount trying to escape using only 50% of his energy) and work up to all out.

The first lesson to learn here is if the opponent moves his hands away from his face, to try and push you off, whack him in the face to discourage him. If he moves his hands away from his face then, logically, his face is unguarded and should be attacked at once. As an automatic reaction he will then bring his hands back to his face as a means of defence (in practice you may use open hand to attack to save serious injury).

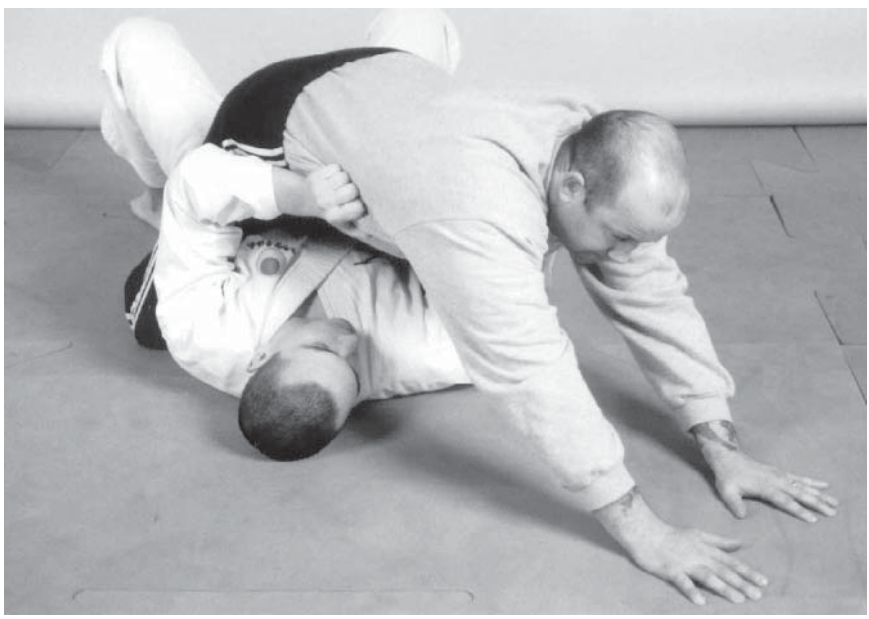
Swimming technique

If the opponent tries to push you off with his hands on your chest hold your mount and swim (in a breast stroke kind of motion) through his arms with both your arms. Be forceful and break his grip; as you swim through, hit the opponent in the face to discourage him from trying again and then base your hands out in front of you.



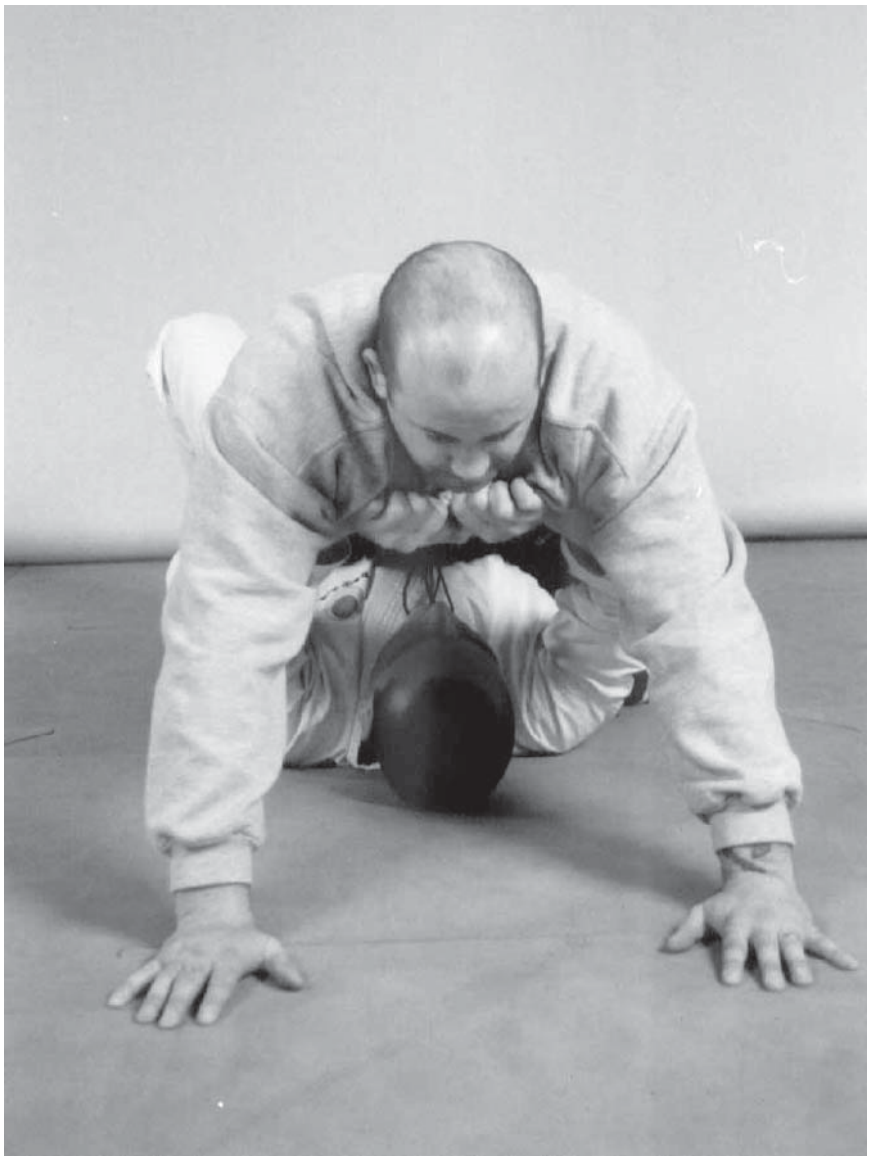
Left & Right Base (Basing)

What to do if the opponent does manage to get his hands to your chest and push over to your right, or left, or if he bridges (arches his hips to throw you off) to try and get you off. As he bridges or pushes you, reach over and base with the appropriate hand (left if to the left side, right if to the right). If for some reason one of your hands is tied up and you cannot base to that side you may use the leg of that side to base instead.



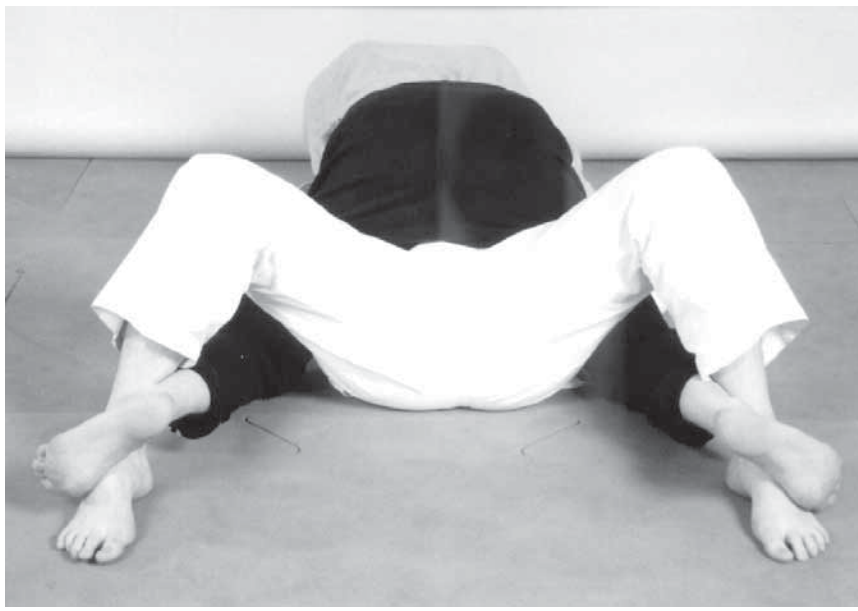
Rear Base

If you find yourself being bridged or pushed directly forward, use both hands to base behind the opponent's head.



Grapevining

For an opponent who is particularly aggressive, you can grapevine your feet around his ankles, making it near impossible for him to bridge or push you off. The only problem with grapevining is that it can also disable you from being mobile, and although you have tied up your opponent, in a way you have also tied up yourself. Push your feet on the inside of the opponent's legs and wrap them around his ankles. For better control straighten yours, and thus his, legs. Once he has calmed down a little you may release his legs so that you can continue with the job in hand.



Riding the mount

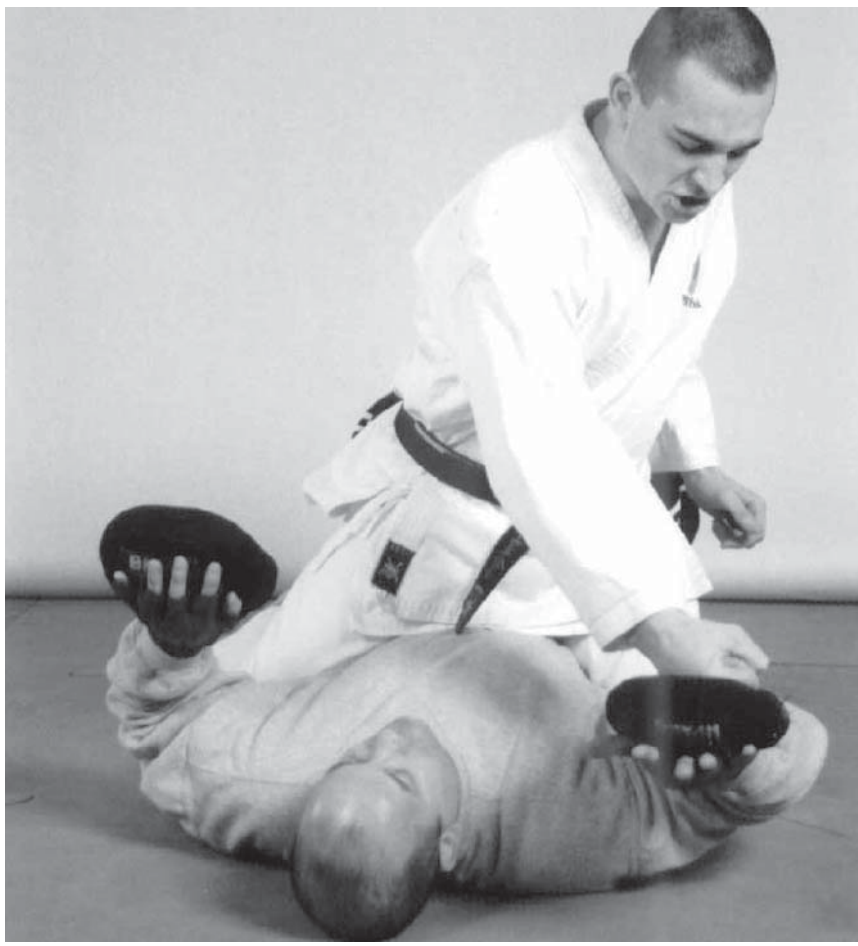
Most often the opponent in the mount will try and roll over onto his stomach in a bid to escape; he will innately feel that this is the 'safe' (if not the only) escape route, even though it is probably the worst position possible when dealing with a good ground fighter. If the opponent is strong and intent on turning and you do not allow him room between your legs to do so, he may catch your leg as he turns and turn you over with him as he escapes.

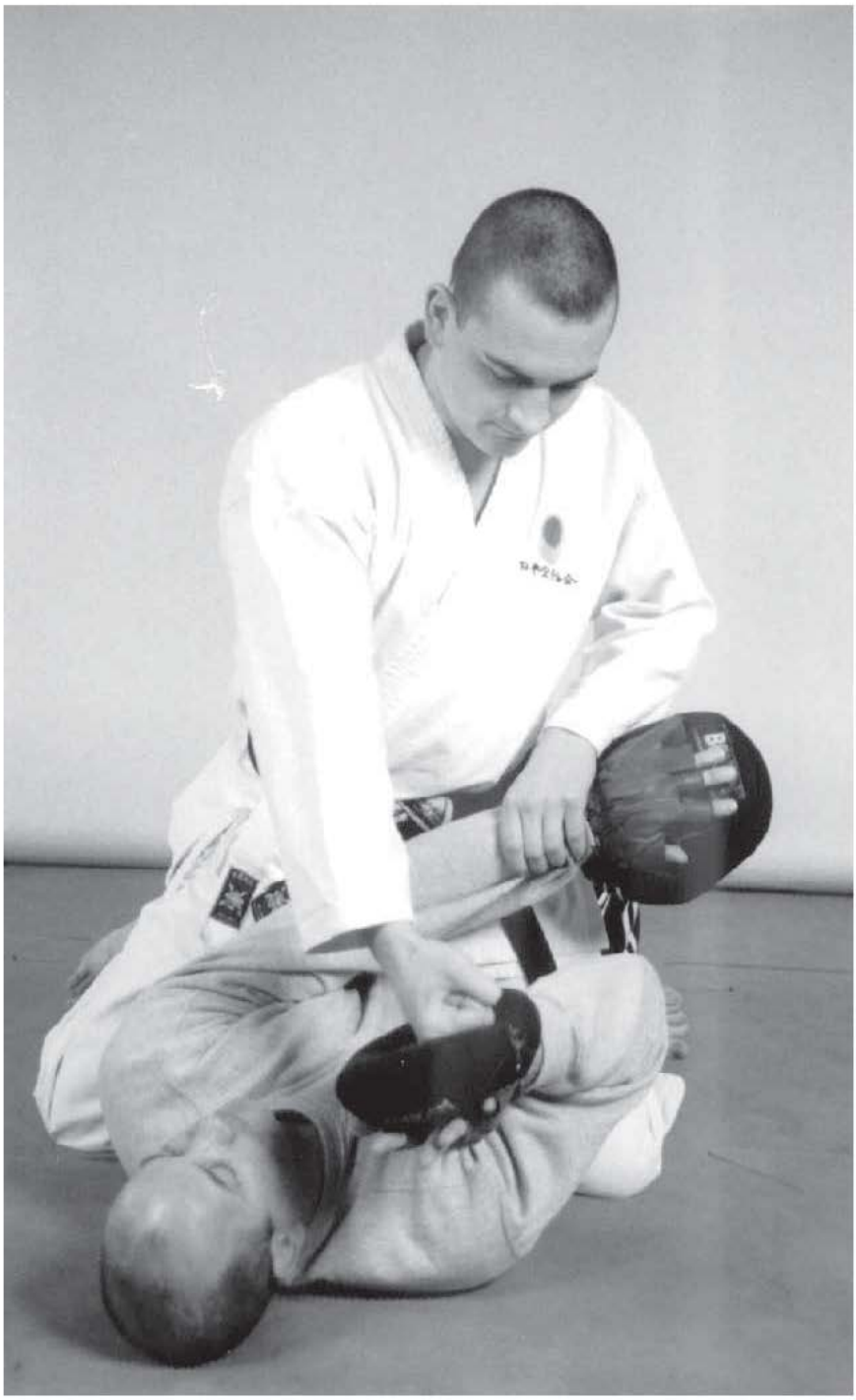
So if he tries to escape by turning, offer token resistance by tensing your thighs. This is to make out that you do not want him to turn, and as he tries harder relax your thighs and allow him the tiniest of margins between your legs to turn. As he turns you can place him straight in a choke or strangle. This is called riding the mount.

To practice, have the opponent roll to his left several times, as he does so you ride the mount using your hands to base and keep balance, and on his last roll apply the choke. Then get the opponent to roll the opposite way several times and repeat the exercise. Please bear in mind that, in a real situation, whenever the head presents itself it is open for undefended, pummelling strikes; this will be your base and most important finishers.

Attacking from the mount

To practice attacking from the mount, have the opponent wear a pair of focus mitts and hold them by either side of his head, then punch the pads with all the power you can muster. This is an acquired technique that must be practised because it is not the same as punching from a standing position. As you drive the punch home, twist your arm into the technique. Alternatively you can hold one of the opponent's hands and punch the other or head butt the pads instead of using your fists.





The mount is probably the best pin for control and for finishing. Many hours must be spent learning to defend this position or, as I have already said, it will be lost as quickly as it is found.

Chapter Two

Side Four Quarter Hold Down

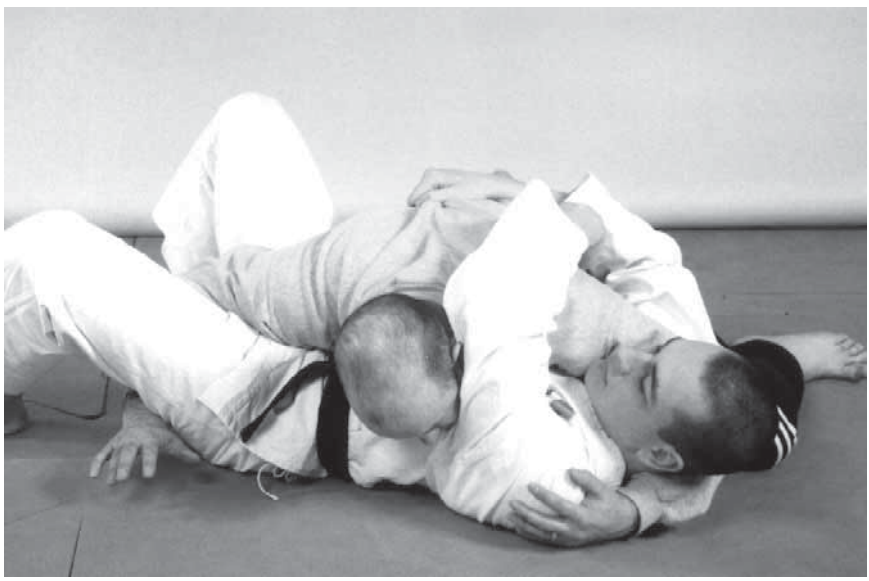
The side 4 1/4 is an excellent controlling pin and, once perfected, easy to maintain. It also offers some excellent finishing techniques to the advanced ground fighter and one can move to the mount or the upper 4 1/4 from here very easily. In many ways it is a traveller's rest hold; that is you can take a rest here when needed and allow an aggressive opponent to thrash himself out. It takes very little energy to defend, though a tremendous amount of energy to escape from. Personally I use this hold as a stop gap when travelling to my finishing position in the mount.

Side 4 1/4 Hold down

Lie across the opponent's torso with your legs straight and spread eagled behind you and your hands basing on the floor in front.

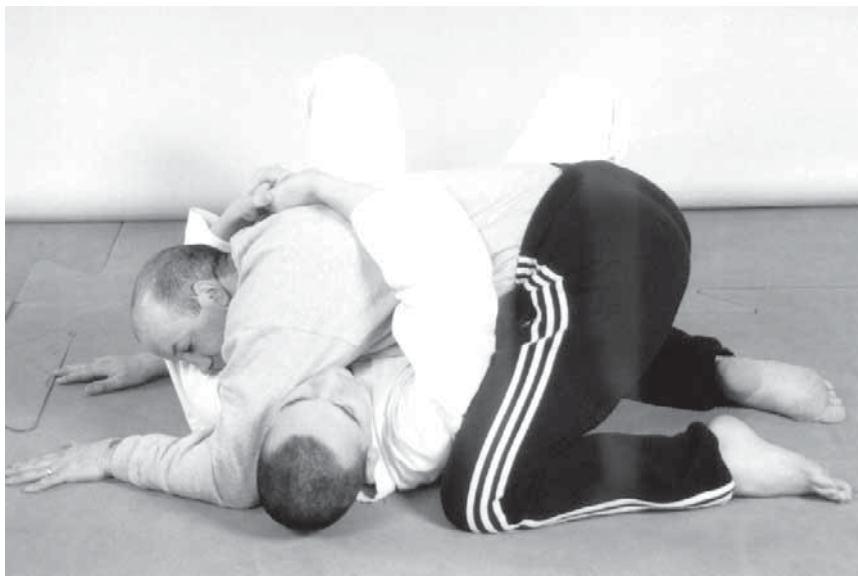
Broken side 4 1/4 Hold down

You can break the hold by tying off the opponent's leg with one of your arms and/or by placing your arm (arm nearest to the opponent's head) around the opponent's head. These variations help to control the opponent better but can often end up in a battle of strength that will leave you, as well as the opponent, tired.



Side 4 1/4 Hold down - knees up

Whilst the base hold has the legs straight and splayed you can also, if you require, bring the knees up to the side of the opponent's body for tighter control. This is also handy if you wish to try and stand up or move to a different pin/position. Whilst it is harder for the opponent to escape whilst your legs are splayed and straight it is also harder for you to move and/or finish.



Defending the side 4 1/4 Hold down

Sensitivity is imperative here - the JKD and Wing Chun stylists should come into their own when defending the mounts. The basic premise when fighting on the ground, (actually when fighting in general), is not to fight force with force. If I have pinned the opponent and he moves to the right in a bid to escape, then I will move with him as opposed to against him; if I use my strength against his then I will get just as tired as him or if he is stronger than I (very unlikely let me tell you) then I will lose the hold. So I will not try and block his strength; rather I will use it.

If he pushes to the right I will follow using minimal movement. As much as I can I will let him take me the way he is moving, he'll be moving my weight as well as his own and thus get tired twice as quickly. If he moves to the left I will do the same and move to the left with him, or if he pushes forward or backward then I will move forward or backward, all the time leaning my weight on him to make his task harder and his movement more laboured. To help me do this I will keep my legs straight and push up onto the balls of my feet focusing all of my weight onto and through my chest and into his chest. I will 'feel' (the feel comes with much "flight time") his movement and go with it, without opposing it - when he gets tired I'll go for my finish.

If I want to drain his energy quicker, or psyche him out, I'll bite his belly/chest/arm etc. (whatever is available), and give him an injection of in-fight adrenalin. If he goes crazy for a few seconds then I'll ride the storm until his energy is all spent, then I'll finish - if it psyches him and he bottles out then he's finished anyway.

Tying up

In his bid to escape the opponent will try everything and anything. In my bid to hold the pin I will make things as awkward and painful and uncomfortable as I can by tying up his arms, biting, punching his exposed groin (for want of a better expression) and/or leaning my elbow/forearm on his exposed neck and throat, etc.

This hold is one of the easiest to maintain and hardest to escape from; flight time (time spent practising the move) is the essential pre-requisite to its effectiveness.

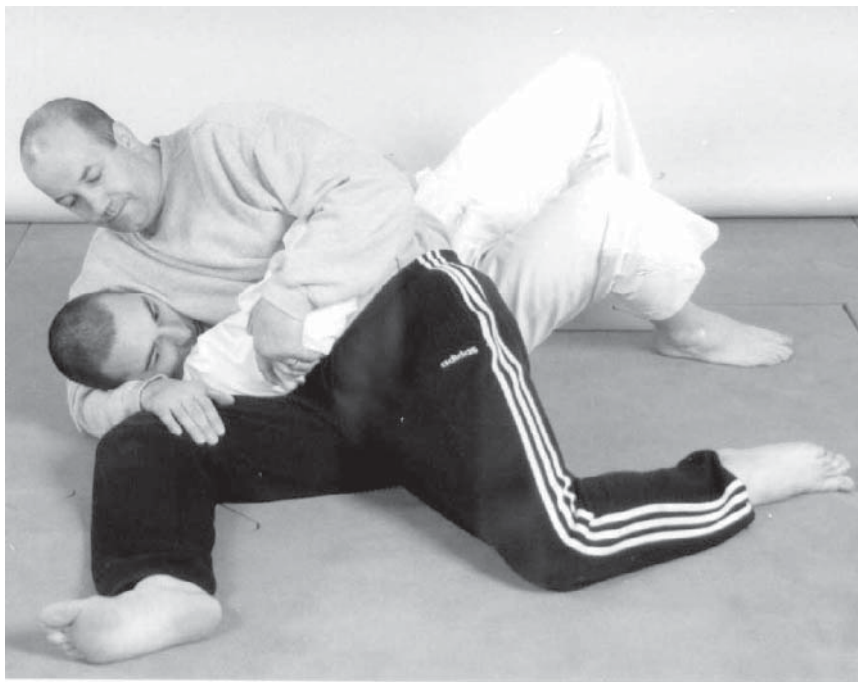
Chapter Three

The Scarf Hold

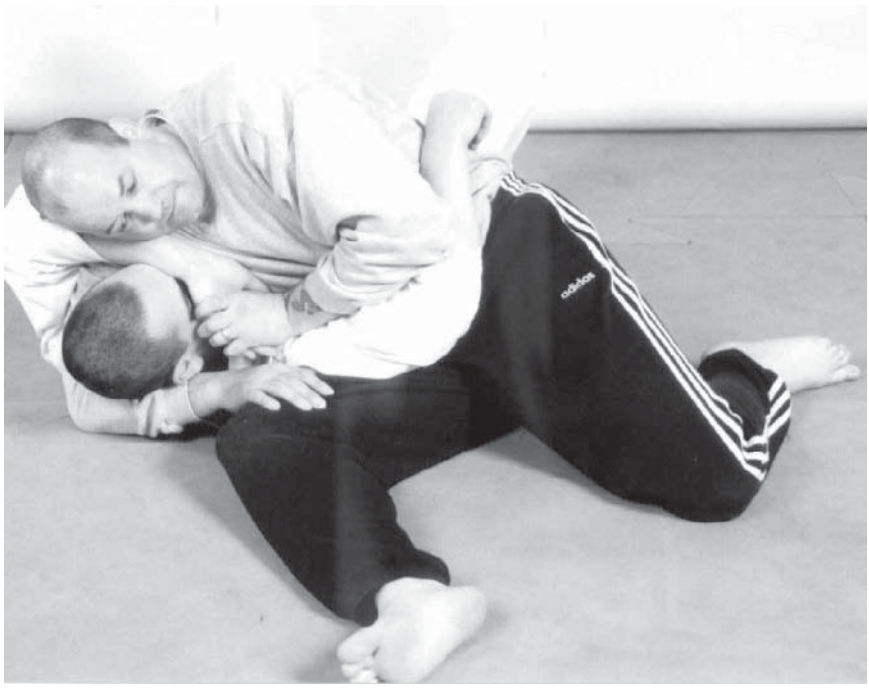
Probably the most recognisable of all the pins is the scarf hold; this is also the hold that many street fighters innately secure to win or control a situation that hits the floor. Whilst it is a relatively simple technique to hold, it is a very difficult position to escape from - though there are several good methods (see Vol. Two: Escapes). Like the side 4 1/4 it is a strong hold that lends itself well to finishing techniques and to movement to other pins - specifically the mount. The opponent held in scarf hold is highly vulnerable to illegal techniques like biting, gouging, punching, etc.

The Scarf Hold

Place your right arm (may be reversed if working at the opposite side of the body) around the opponent's neck (he is lying on his back) and grabbing either his clothing or your own right knee to secure, place his left arm under your right armpit and bring your right knee close to his face whilst your left leg splays out, hurdler style, behind you, keeping the knee on the floor.

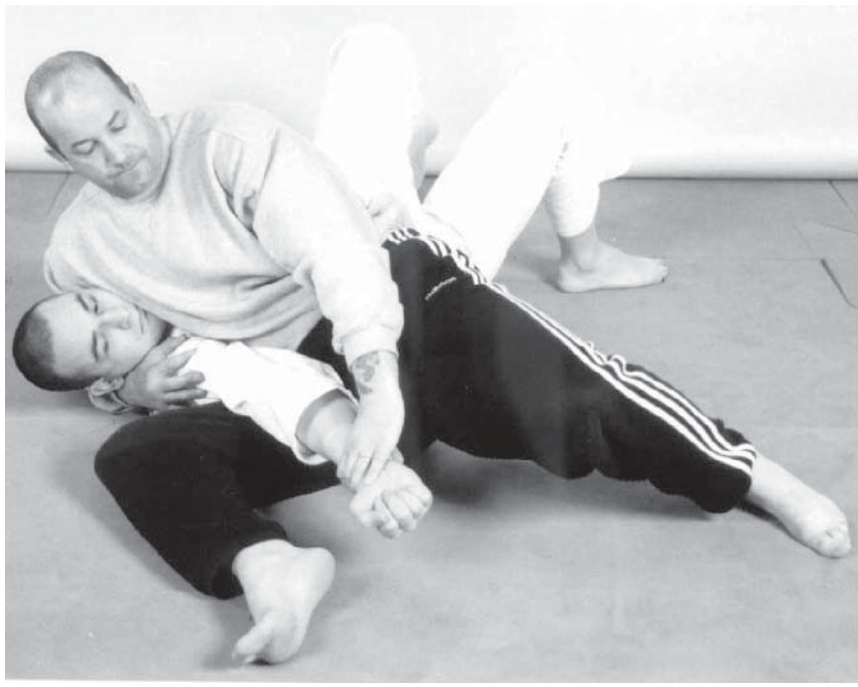


Bend forward and keep your head as close to the opponent's as possible; this will protect your throat, face and eyes from his free left hand. This leaves your right hand free to attack the opponent. If the opponent brings his free left hand over to attack you lift your head up, grab the hand and bend back the fingers and push it under your chin.



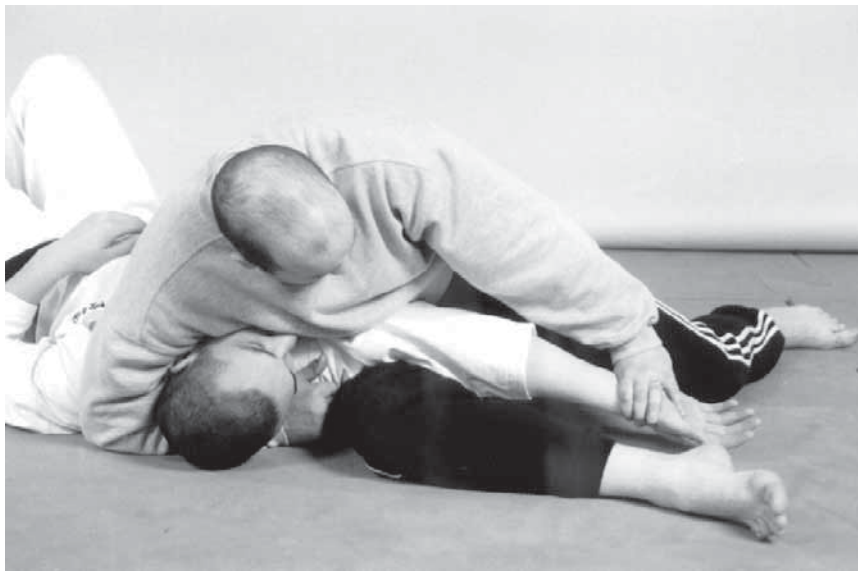
If his right hand gets free from under your left arm, you can do one of several things:

1) Bar it over your right leg.



2) If the arm will not straighten, switch legs to create a higher fulcrum and bar it over your left leg.

3) If he is still struggling then quickly switch back the legs and drive the arm into/over the lower fulcrum of the right leg.



4) Tie the arm off under the reverse/left leg, to bar turn your hips up to the ceiling and push.

5) Tie the arm off under the right leg.

6) If the opponent uses the freed arm to try and push or punch your face, quickly move your face away and push the arm with your left arm so that his arm is trapped across his own neck; this, when squeezed, will make for a strong choke/strangle.

Defending the Scarf Hold

Defending this hold is very similar to defending any hold, i.e., go with the flow, if the opponent pulls you around to the left then go to the left with him, if he pulls you around to the right then go to the right, so that he is getting tired and you're getting carried. If the opponent is getting a little too frisky then jab your thumb into his eye, that ought to quieten him down a little.

This hold is only difficult to defend when you are restricted (no gouging, punching, biting etc.). If there are no restrictions (in a real fight there certainly are none) and if the opponent is too strong then an eye gouge will be the end of the fight - if you so desire. If he brings his free arm into play he really has no target, other than the bony part of your head that will hurt him as much as you, but, as stated earlier, that can be tied off any way.

If he frees his other arm it can be dealt with as per foregoing illustrations. If the opponent is really strong and you are struggling to hold him you can roll slightly onto your belly and bring your right leg behind you (this is almost the Jack-knife position) to spread the weight, but this is really changing holds as opposed to defending a specific hold.

Attacking the Scarf Hold

We've already mentioned a little about attacking from the scarf hold by using gouging techniques; this is without doubt the strongest and most brutal attack from this position.

However, not everyone has the inclination to gouge an opponent's eye out: more affable alternatives may be biting his exposed nose/face (no!), pushing your fist or fingers into the side of his wind pipe, or even sticking your fingers up his nostrils and tearing.

To be honest most of it is pretty ugly stuff, but, if the guy is going to take your life or rape your wife they are handy to know.

A lot of punching power, contrary to popular belief, can be generated from the scarf hold position. The best way to practice is to get the opponent to wear a pair of focus mitts and hold them, from underneath the hold, close to his head, then you hit them.

Again, this is an acquired technique that will need much practice before real power can be generated, but with practice these punches are/can be very powerful finishing techniques.

Practising this hold, and all the pins, will develop manipulative strength and also the ability to hold an opponent with minimal strength so as not to over tax your reserves. So practice with as little compliancy as possible, eventually with no compliancy at all.

Chapter Four

The Jack-Knife

The Jack-knife is a sort of in-between hold that I invented (I'm sure that other people have found the same hold - but I've never seen it in any books or on any videos before so as far as I'm concerned, it's mine) and is a wonderful little hold that takes you nicely from scarf hold to upper 4 1/4. It also works very nicely in conjunction with scarf hold either to help hold the base or finish with a smother hold (smothering is another concept that I'm sure others have found but I have never seen written about before, so that's mine as well).

The Jack-knife

Basically the jack-knife controls the opponent's head at a 45 degree angle to his body; somewhere (anywhere) between scarf hold and upper 4 1/4 hold. Take the hold from the scarf hold position so the opponent's right arm is still tucked under your left armpit. Your right arm is still wrapped around the opponent's neck, bring your left arm forward to either pin the head still or push it, via any pain or pressure point, so that the opponent's mouth and nose are towards the ceiling.

This will place him ideally for the smother (the smother is when you cover the opponent's mouth and nose with any part of your body, in this case the shoulder and upper chest, and lean/press your weight on them to block the airways and stop them breathing). It can also be used as a traveller's rest if you want to take a minute out and think about what's going on. Also to allow the opponent to tire himself out a little; the body is very open to pummelling punches which can be used to disable or inflict in-fight adrenalin, and the eyes are also very vulnerable to gouging with your right hand.

Broken Jack-knife

This hold can be performed broken by lying across the opponent's face with the hands free (as illus) to base.

Knees up

If the opponent is strong it is advisable to keep the legs straight and splayed, stay on your toes; as he tires you can shorten the hold by bringing the knees up closer to the opponent's face to prepare for finish or to get back to your feet.

Defending the Jack-knife

As with all defences stay loose and go with the flow, move in the same direction as the opponent, let him take you as opposed to making big movements yourself. Keep on your toes if he is strong and make sure that he feels your weight. If you find that he is too strong and you cannot hold him then move to a better pin, an upper 4 1/4 or mount.

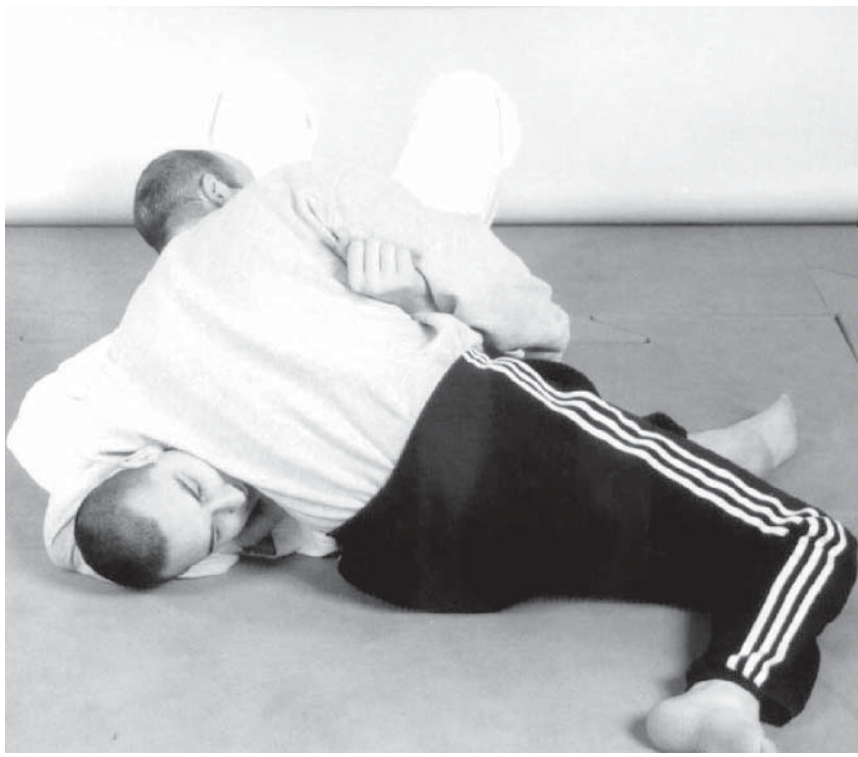
Chapter Five

Reverse Scarf Hold

The reverse scarf hold is an ideal resting position when one is travelling around the body, especially from upper 4 1/4 to mount. It can also be a very strong hold and, if you get a good grip of the opponent's neck and head, one can crank the neck and finish from here. More realistically it is a very good traveller's rest hold.

Reverse scarf hold

Sitting at the head of the opponent, facing the same direction wrap your left arm under his head and around his neck, under from the left side of his head and out from the right side of his head where it meets and links with the right hand, sit with your right knee hurdled and by the opponent's head and your left leg splayed to your rear, keeping the knee to the floor.



Pins: The Bedrock

To secure the hold lean forward and put your weight onto the opponent, to crank the neck, lean backwards and wrench the neck with the pull of both your arms. This is not a very strong hold (though on a good day with the wind behind you it can be) but it is an excellent mid-way point from upper 4 1/4 to mount. I personally use it more as a traveller's rest than anything else.

Defending the reverse scarf hold

There is not a lot that the opponent can do to escape from this position other than wriggle and thrash, if and when he does ride the storm, if he does look like escaping then move to a more prone position like the mount or the upper 4 1/4.

Attacking the reverse scarf hold

Whilst it is not easy for the opponent to escape from this position it is not the best place in the world to finish from either, quite often one has to move to a better position to secure a finish. Having said that the opponent's ribs, floating ribs in particular, are very vulnerable to strikes from the reverse scare hold, the throat is also very open to attacks from your right hand and the mount position is but the blink of an eye away, so better to use the scarf hold as a traveller's rest and do as much damage as possible whilst there, that way when, if, you do move to a better finishing position you will be dealing with a weakened, injured often exhausted opponent.

Chapter Six

Upper Four Quarter Hold Down

They say (who ever they are) that the best way to control a man is to control his head, then his body will follow. I have found this to be true both physically and psychologically, which is why the upper 4 1/4 is one of my favourite pins. It's not the prettiest of moves - in fact there is very little to get excited about when you look at the hold, perhaps that is why it is so often ignored. For me it is another real bread and butter pin, and if I get anyone that is too strong or who feels a little feisty or if I am feeling a little tired and need a rest then I'll whip around to the upper 4 1/4 at the earliest opportunity and control the opponent from the head down.

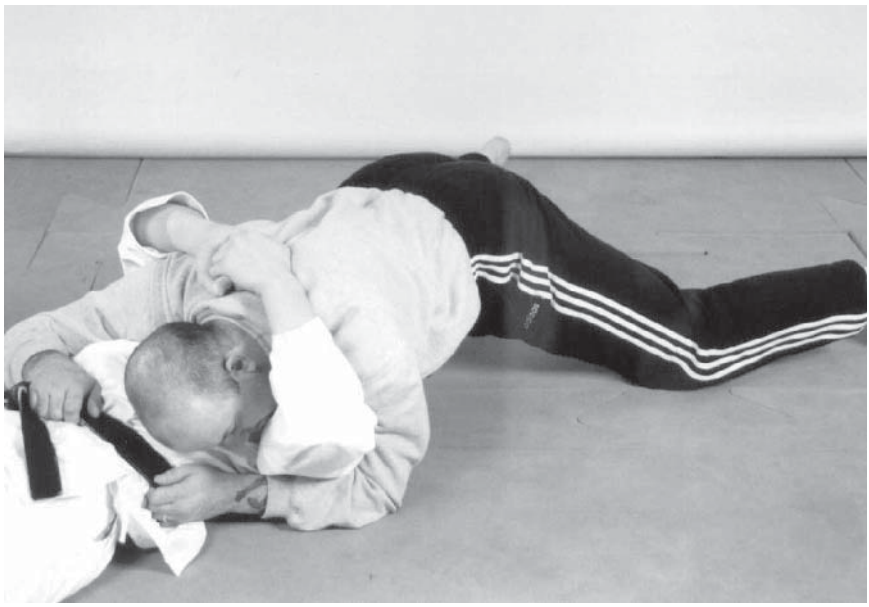
It is a very easy move to hold and a very hard move to escape from, a real wild and aggressive opponent will empty his fuel tank in a hurry when you hold him in the upper 4 1/4, also, if you position your body correctly, you can easily finish with a smother from this position and, if you desire you can get back to a standing position and finish from here also.

Upper 4 1/4 Hold down

Lie your chest on your opponent's head/face and straighten and splay your legs out directly behind you, grip his belt/trousers/ shirt (what ever you can grab) with both hands to secure the hold. To make the hold more uncomfortable for the opponent go on to your toes and focus your weight onto and through his face.

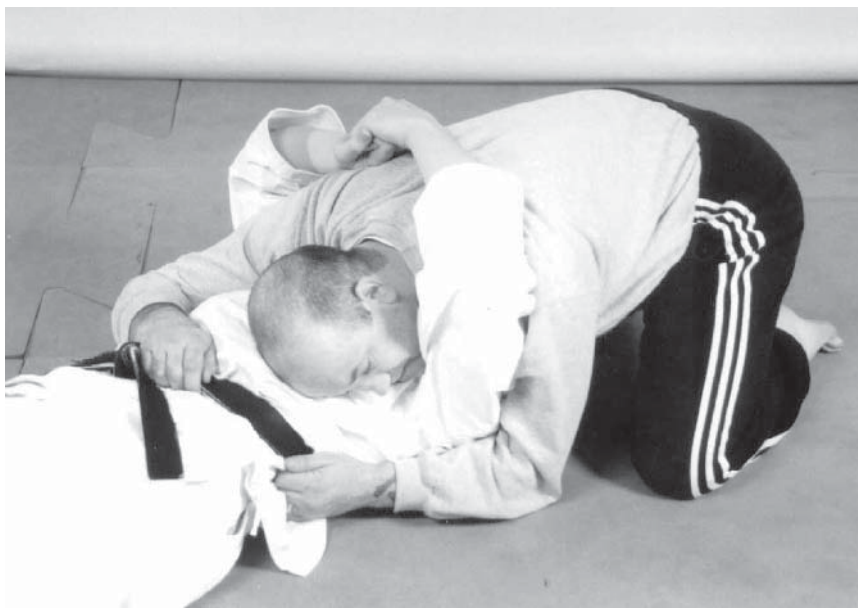
Broken Upper 4 1/4 Hold down

A variation of this hold is to feed your arms under his, as opposed to over in the conventional hold, and grip the trousers, or even stagger the arms - one under his arm, one over. To be honest it doesn't really matter where your arms sit as long as you have a good grip and feel comfortable.



Knees Up

Upper 4 1/4 can also be employed with the knees up, as per illustration. This makes the hold more compact and is good preparation for movement-finish or standing up.



Attacking the upper 4 1/4 Hold down.

The best attack from the upper 4 1/4 is the smother, force the opponent's face, via pain or pressure points, under the cheek bone, in the eye etc, so that it is facing upwards, lie your chest/ upper stomach across the nose and mouth to block the air ways and focus your weight onto and through the same point.

The groin is also open to hand strikes or grabs, it is also easy to feed your hands back and attack the throat and or larynx by squeezing it closed with one or both hands. The eyes can be attacked in the same way.

Defending the Upper 4 1/4 Hold down

Defence again is primarily about sensitivity, so go with the flow. If the opponent moves to the left, follow to the left, if he moves to the right, follow to the right, if he goes backwards or forwards then you do likewise. If you want to tire the opponent quickly give him some pain to trigger his in-fight adrenalin - but be ready for the possibility of bucking and bronking. The upper 4 1/4 is an ideal position for resting or for moving onto other positions for finish, ie the reverse scarf hold, mount position etc.

As with the other pins, flight time in holding, defending and attacking (from) the upper 4 1/4 is the pre-requisite to mastering it.

Chapter Seven

Drilling the Pins

The good thing about the pins is that you can quite easily, with practice, go from one to another and travel all around the body, allowing you to change pins according to the energy that your opponent feeds you.

It is also very disorientating to the opponent when you whiz around his body with consummate ease.

Changing from one pin to another needs to be smooth and practised so that, even though you are changing one hold for another, you are in no danger of losing the controlling position.

The first thing to address is drilling all of the pins in a sequence that takes you all around the body using all of the aforementioned pins, both left side and right side.

To start off with this routine should be done slowly and predictably so that all the tiny details are addressed. Later, after confidence in the holds has been found, you should practice going around the body without partner compliancy.

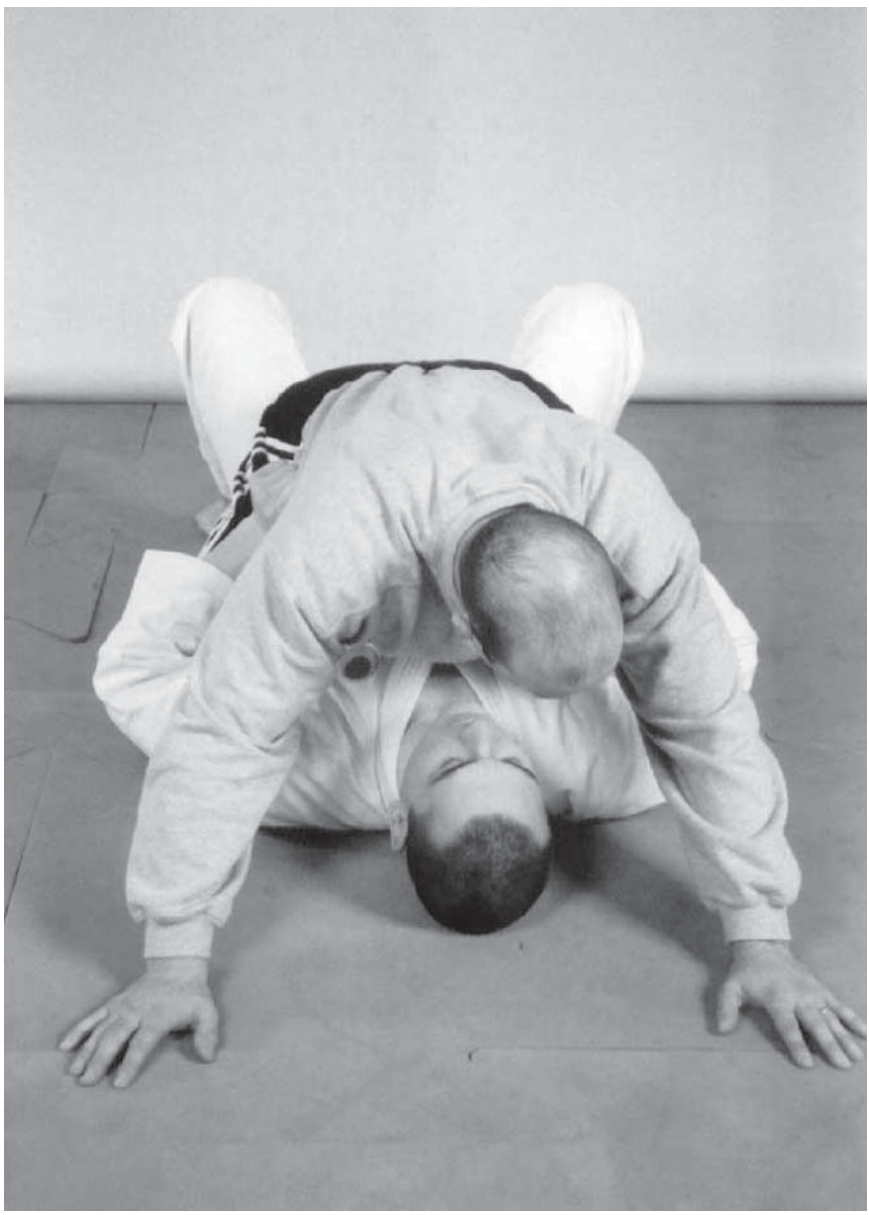
I am going to list some of the drills that I use and teach for ground pins but, as I always say, nothing is cast in stone and you can change the drills to suit or even make up drills of your own.

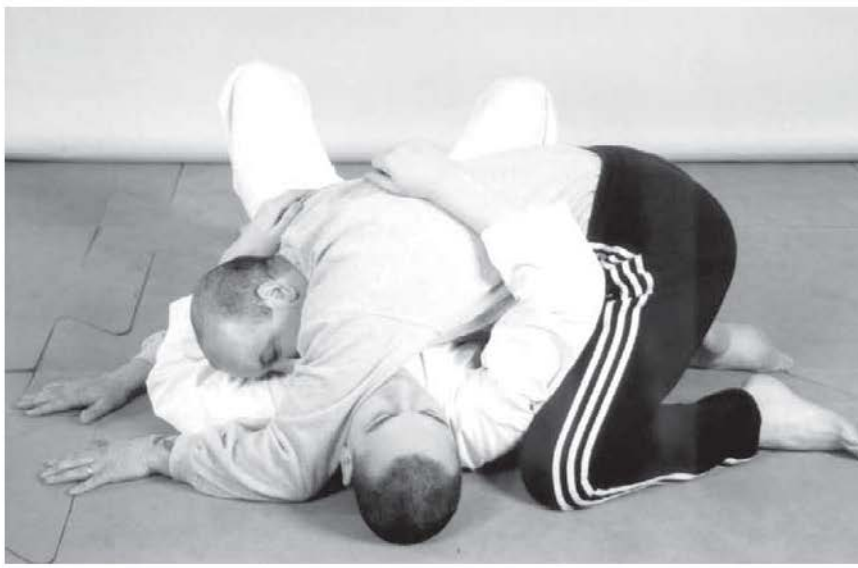
Eventually, with much flight time, you should feel as though you are floating from one pin to another - keeping body contact with him at all times - with the developed sensitivity you should feel as one with the opponent.

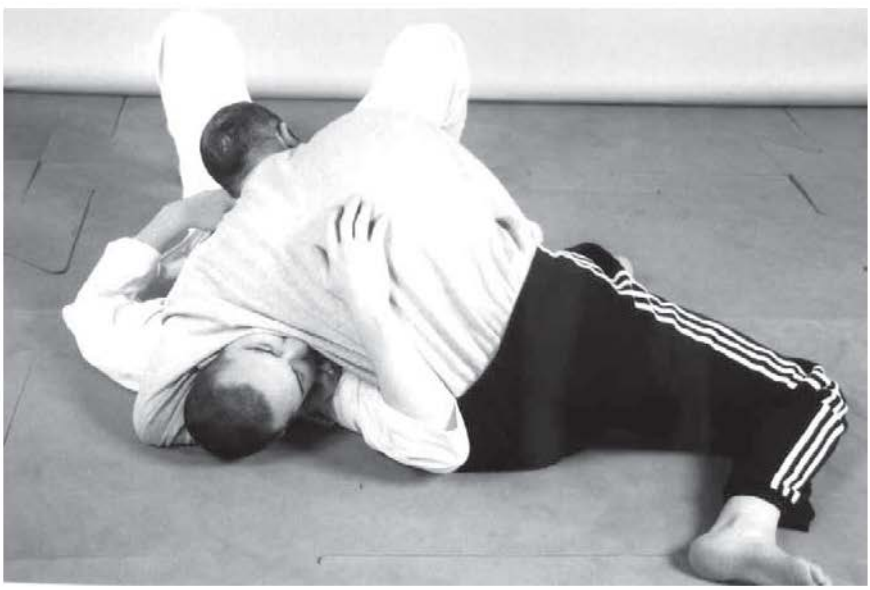
The 11 Pin drill

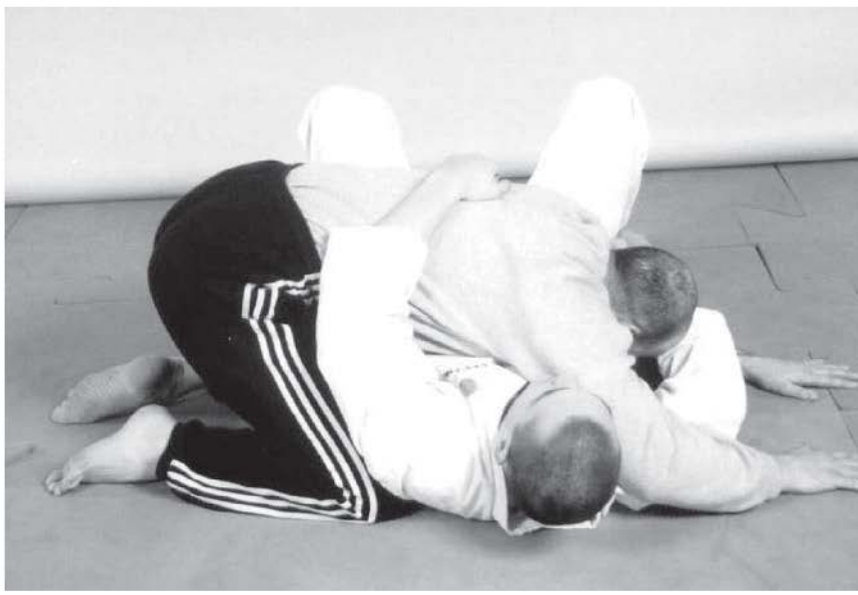
The 11 pin drill incorporates all of the pins in the latter pages from both left side and right (it is very important to be able to perform these moves from both sides). Because I have already gone through the finer details of the pins in the latter pages I will list the techniques in the following drill with no detail to technique. The pictures that illustrate will better show how to move from on technique to another.

The Mount Position - Side 4 1/4 (right side)
- scarf hold (right side) - Jack-knife
- reverse scarf hold-upper 4 1/4 - jack-knife (left side)
- reverse scarf hold (left side) - scarf hold (left side)
- side 4 1/4 (left side) and back to the mount position.

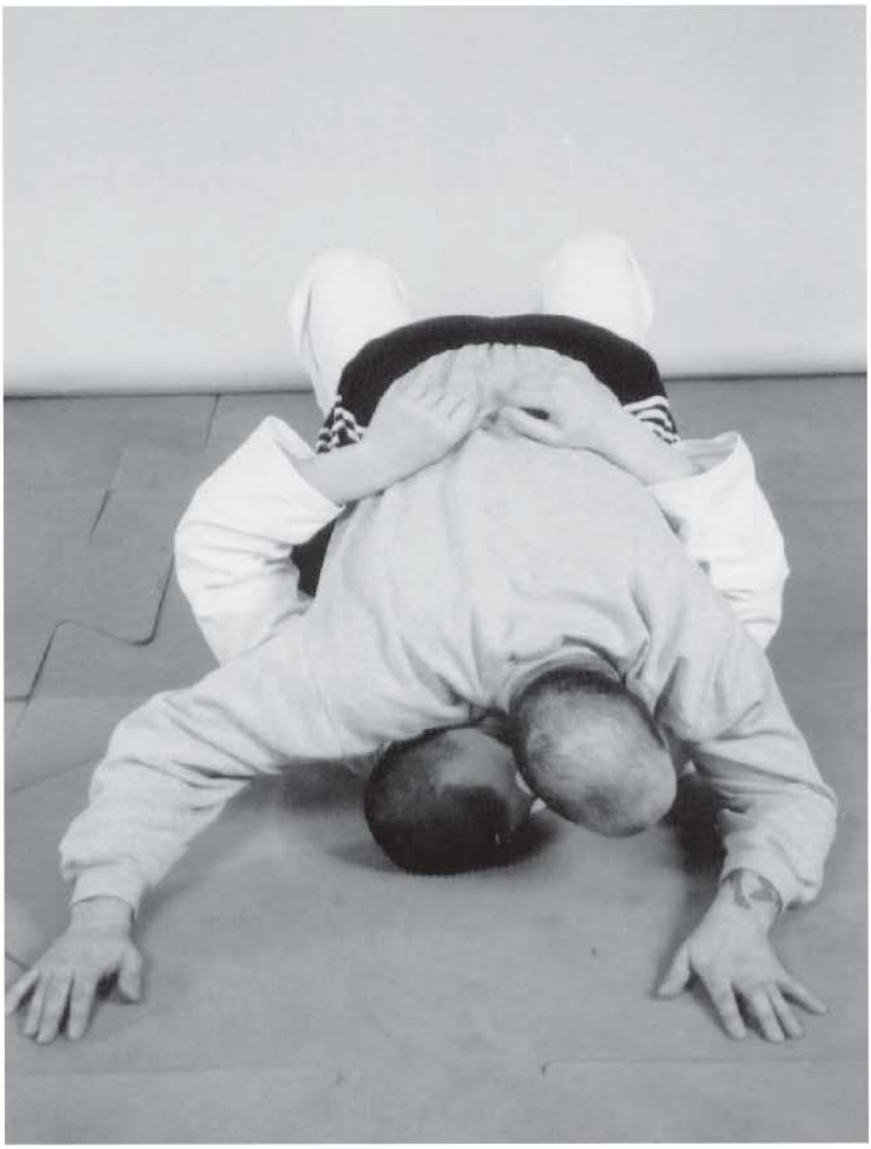








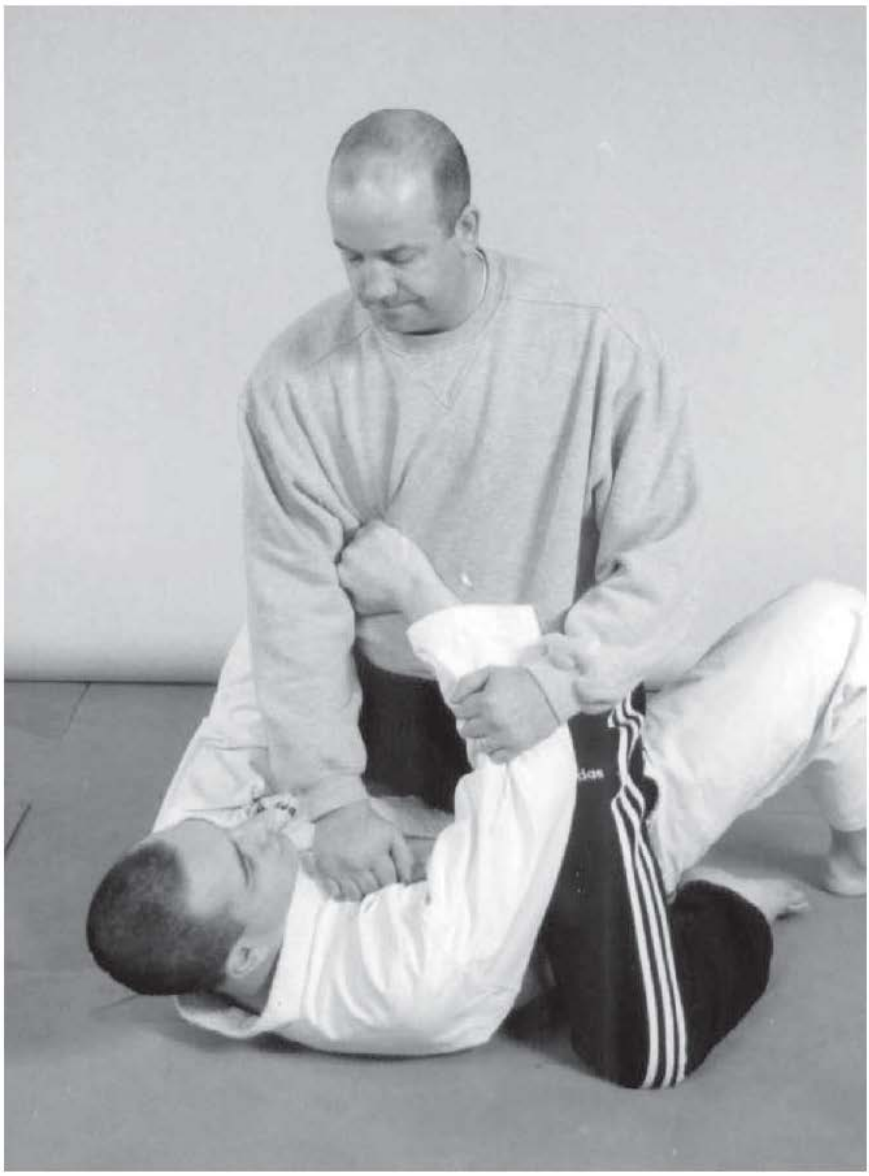
Pins: The Bedrock



Keep practising with partner compliancy until you feel confident, then practice the individual pins without compliancy - it is important here that the opponent tries his hardest to escape - and ultimately the whole sequence with the opponent trying to escape at every and any opportunity.

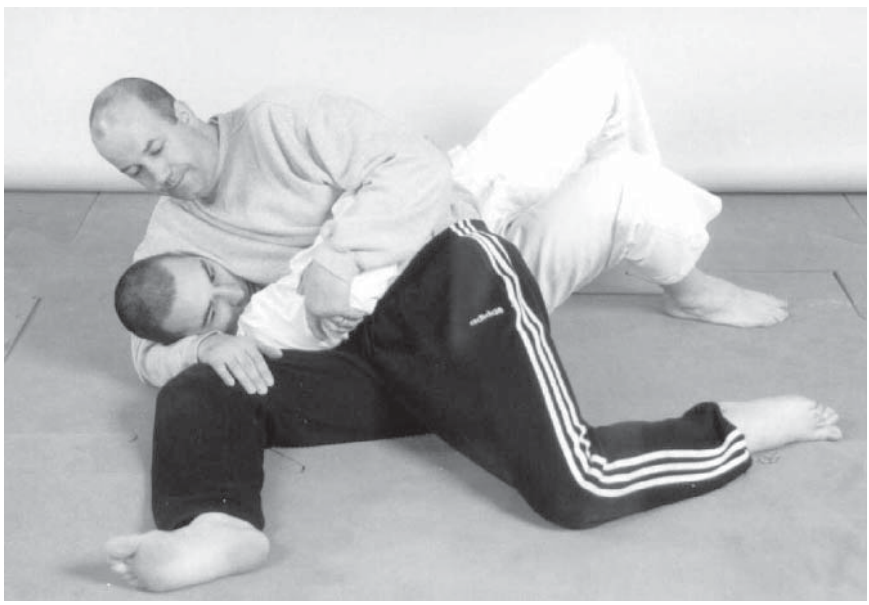
Side to side drill

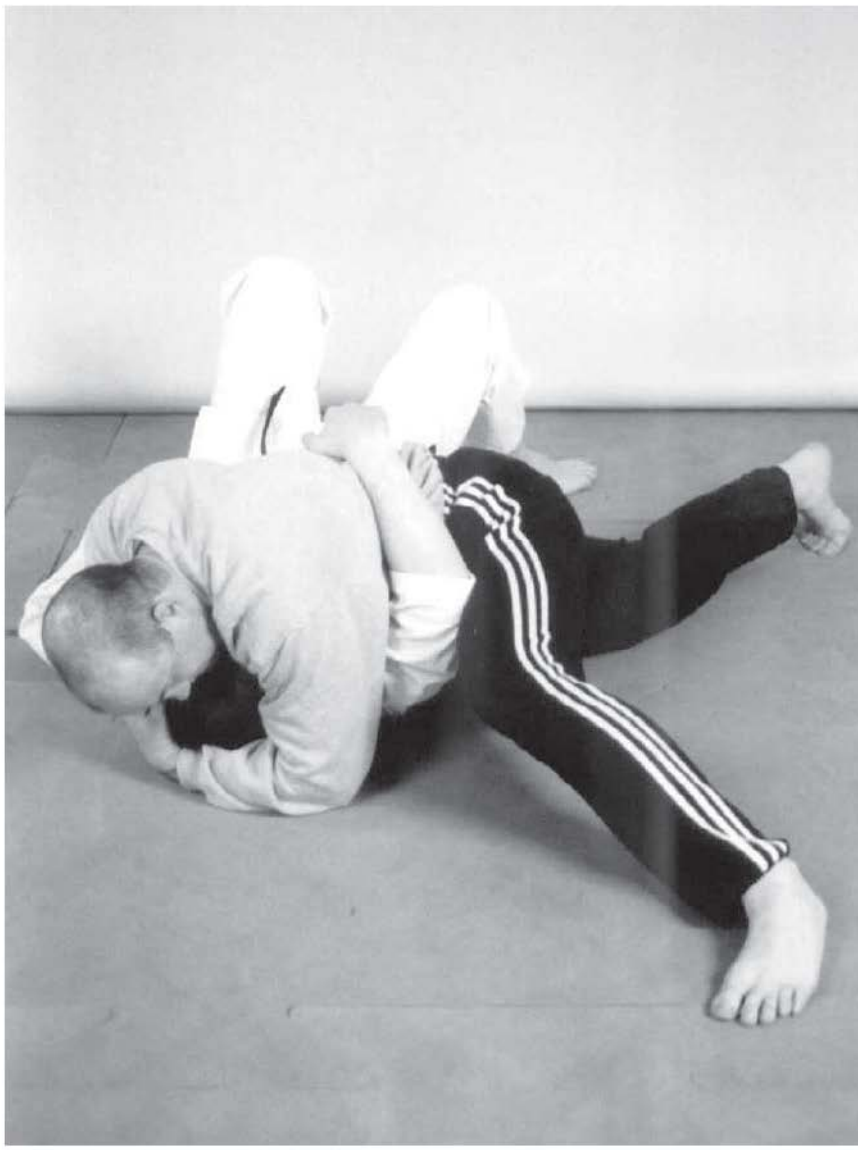
Right Scarf Hold - Mount position - left scarf Hold (see illus). Keep close to the opponent at all times, stick to him like glue and leave as little gap between you and him as possible as you go from one hold to another.



Scarf hold to jack-knife drill;
(practised to the left hand or/and right hand side)
Scarf hold - jack-knife.

As you move from the scarf hold to the jack-knife loosen the grip around his neck slightly and use your left hand to control his head, as you get into the jack-knife go straight onto your toes and focus all your weight onto your chest, which should be across his face, then jump back into the scarf hold again. Get a rhythm of going smoothly from scarf hold to jack-knife until your have done 10 repetitions of both holds.





Jack-knife to upper 4 1/4 drill; Jack-knife-Upper 4 1/4.

From the jack-knife position with your legs straight behind you and on your toes, release your grip around the opponent's head and move around, still on your toes so that the weight stays on the opponent, to the upper 4 1/4, as you move bring your arms down the torso of the opponent and grip an appendage to secure hold. Again move back and forward for 20 reps in all.

Side to side drill;
Left side 4 1/4-mount-right side 4 1/4.

From the left side 4 1/4 pin crawl over the opponent's body into the mount position and then completely over into the right side 4 1/4 pin then move back the opposite way and repeat the exercise. Go over and back 20 times.

The fan drill; Right Side 4 1/4
- jack-knife - upper 4 1/4
- left jack-knife to left side 4 1/4.

Basically we are going all around the upper part of the opponent's body in a kind of fan action. From side 4 1/4 keep your legs straight and on your toes and quickly move right the way around the body going through right jack-knife to upper 4 1/4 to left jack-knife to left side 4 1/4 and then back again.

Stay on your toes and keep the movement light, almost hovering just above the opponent's body. Go back and forward twenty times using your hands to control the opponent's body on the way around.

Drills are very important if you want these techniques to work in the real world, so is un-compliancy on behalf of the opponent in training. As stated, all should be practised initially with a compliant opponent and then tested all-out with an opponent who is trying his utmost to escape.

If you do not practice in this way don't be surprised or disappointed when an un-compliant enemy throws you off like a piece of rag because you haven't pressure tested what you have. Pressure testing and un-compliancy will develop the right muscles and manipulative strength needed to make the technique real.

Conclusion

Thank you for reading Volume One of the ground fighting series, the pins are the bedrock. I have also given and hinted at some good finishes, although it goes without saying that control comes before finish if you want to be clinical. These moves need to be practised and re-practised diligently if you want your base to be a solid one to work from, as the great Musashi said (not to me personally): 1,000 days to learn technique, 10,000 days to polish.

These techniques are unlikely to work for you unless they become a part of you. The techniques that follow in the rest of the series, escapes and finishes of every kind, also only work on the premise that you have a good solid base from which to work. A finish without a base is like trying to put a gloss of paint over a lump of tree and call it furniture: priming is essential if you want a polished finish but, as they say (it's them again) you can't polish a turd, so at the very high risk of over emphasising the point and having people say 'my goodness that Geoff Thompson repeats himself a bit' get the basics right before moving onto the finishes or they'll be about as useful as something really useless.

Experiment, find and make moves up as you go along. As long as they work for you that's good enough. What you don't want to do is use filling techniques that look good but do not have a practical use. Rather, spend your time more constructively on the ones that really do and remember if there is no pressure then there is no guarantee.

For techniques on bars, chokes, strangles, fighting from the knees-back etc. please refer to the other five volumes advertised in the back of this text.

I wish you all the best with your search for better, more realistic fighting for defence. Knowledge is power: that knowledge can be derived from books, videos, courses, classes, practice etc.

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GROUND

GEOFF THOMPSON

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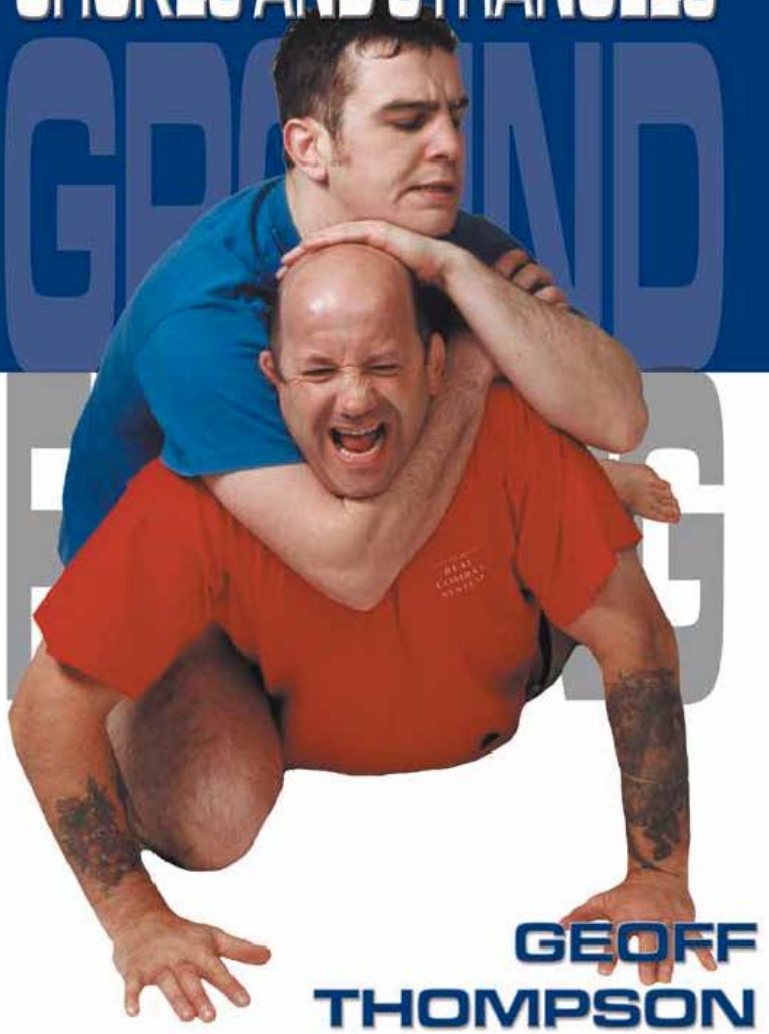

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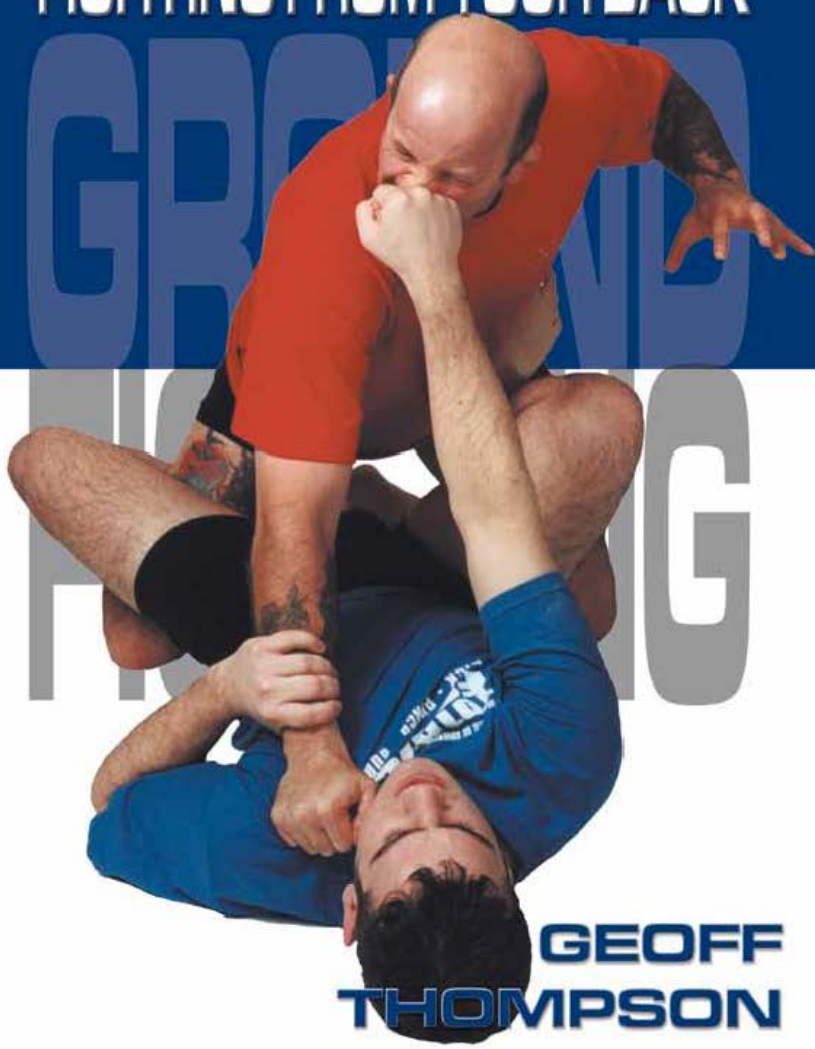

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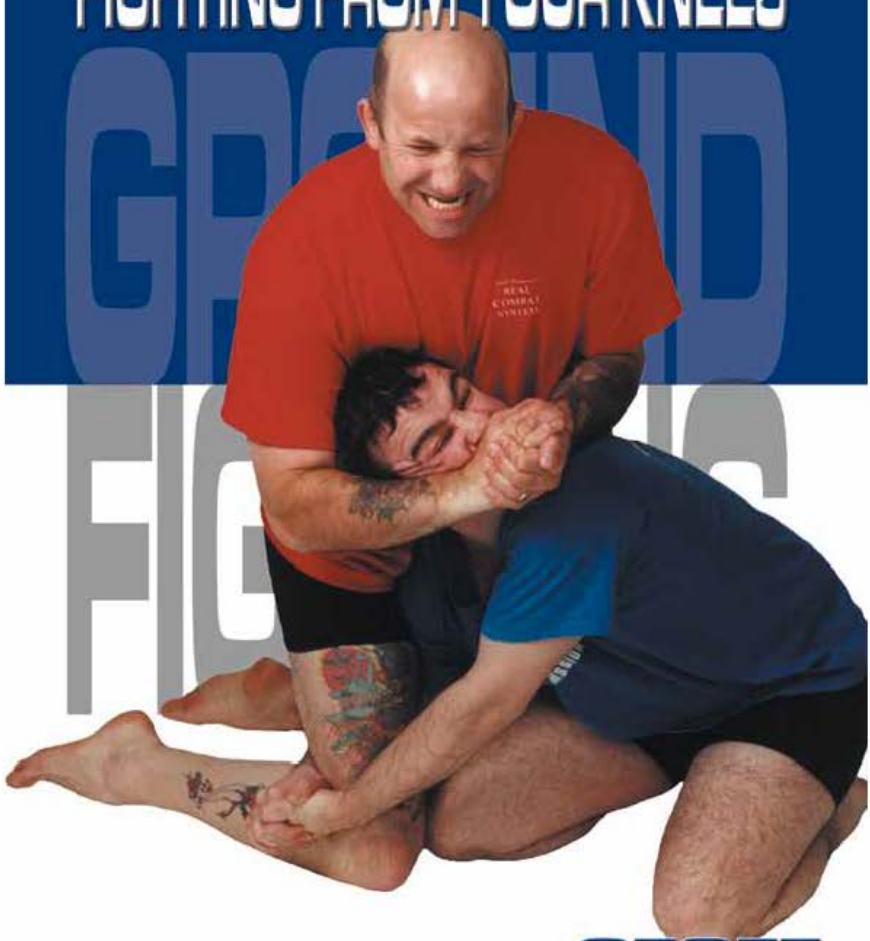

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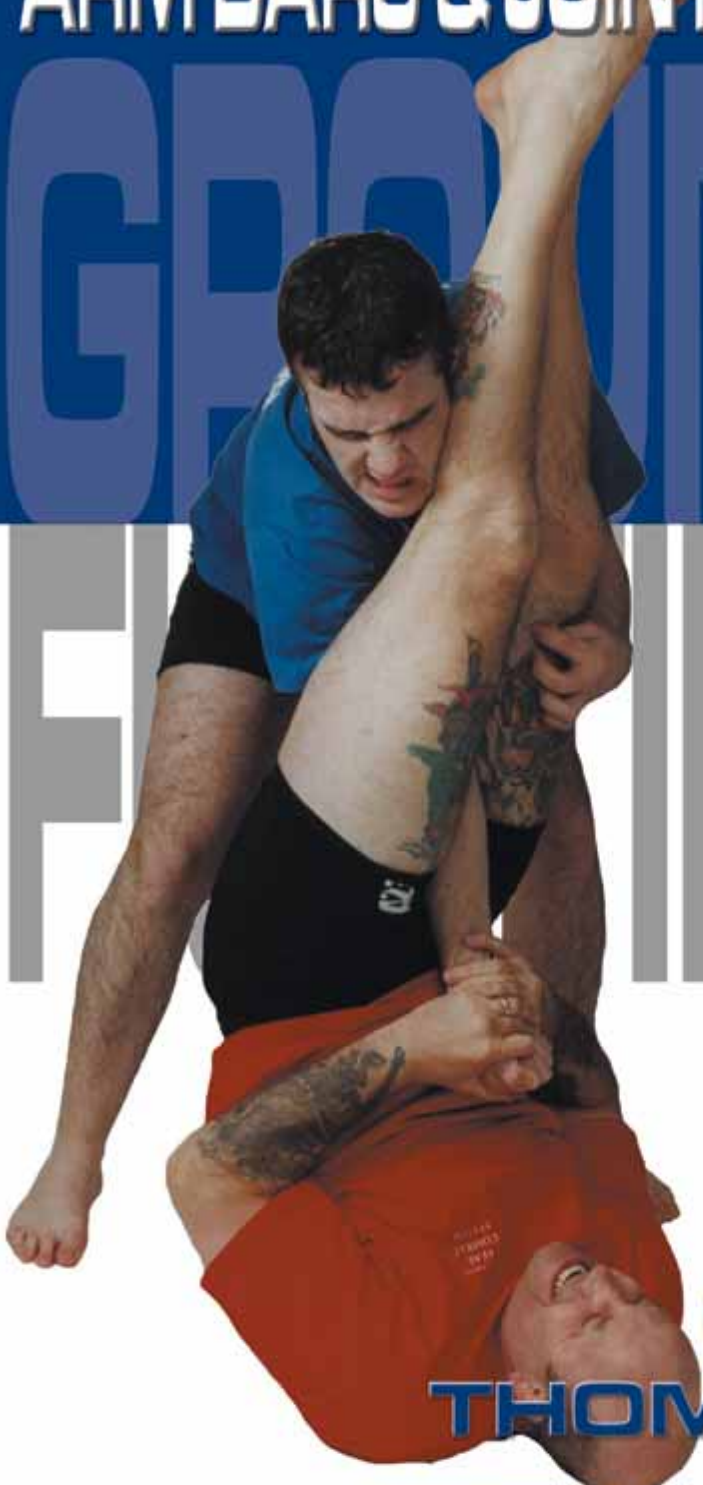

GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

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Important note

With ground fighting techniques the author recommends that you practice only under supervision to avoid accidents and always employ the 'tap system' in practice (if you want to submit or a technique is too painful or you wish to stop practice at any time tap the mat, tap yourself or your opponent with your hand or foot; if this is not possible just say to your opponent 'tap'). If an opponent taps out it is imperative that you release your hold immediately or suffer the consequence of what might be serious injury, and remember, what goes around comes around. If you do not release when he taps he may not release the next time you tap.

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

About the author

Geoff Thompson has written over 20 published books and is known world wide for his autobiography *Watch My back*, about his nine years working as a night club doorman. He holds the rank of 6th Dan black belt in Japanese karate, 1st Dan in Judo and is also qualified to senior instructor level in various other forms of wrestling and martial arts. He has several scripts for stage, screen and TV in development with Destiny Films.

He has published several articles for GQ magazine, and has also been featured in *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Arena*, *Front* and *Loaded* magazines, and has been featured many times on mainstream TV.

Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine.

For full details of other books and videos by
Geoff Thompson, visit www.geoffthompson.com

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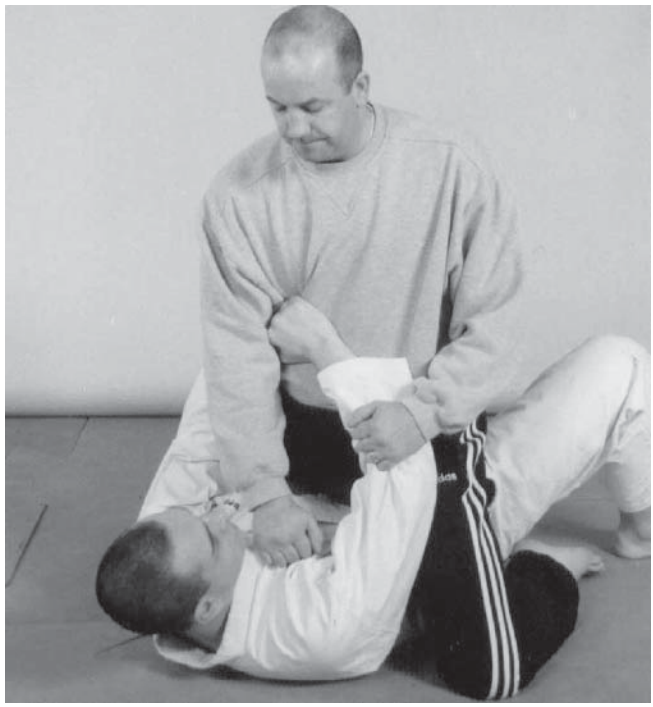
Review

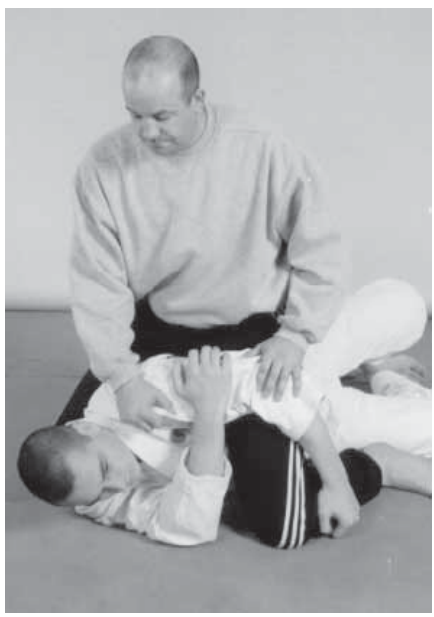
For those that have read the previous volumes of this series I apologise for repeating material. I would like to, before I start talking about bars and locks from the various positions, quickly review the basic pins, because if you do not know them a lot of the speak through out the text may seem like gobble-de-gook.

I have no intention of actually going into the histrionics of the holds, how to defend them and attack from them and the real intricacies etc. that, as I said, is a volume on its own. I will repeat, though, that the pins are the bedrock of ground fighting and to go on to finishing techniques of a complex nature before learning the imperative basics is a quick way to failing at everything that you attempt.

Master the standing and walking before you try the running and sprinting, the control of the opponent on the floor, via the pinning techniques, is so very, very, VERY important that to miss it is like diving in the water before you have learned to swim. All I will list in this chapter is the holds themself with one accompanying illustration so that, if you haven't read the other books and have no knowledge of the 'ground' you'll at least understand the 'speak'.

The Mount Position:
Side Mount; Reverse Mount



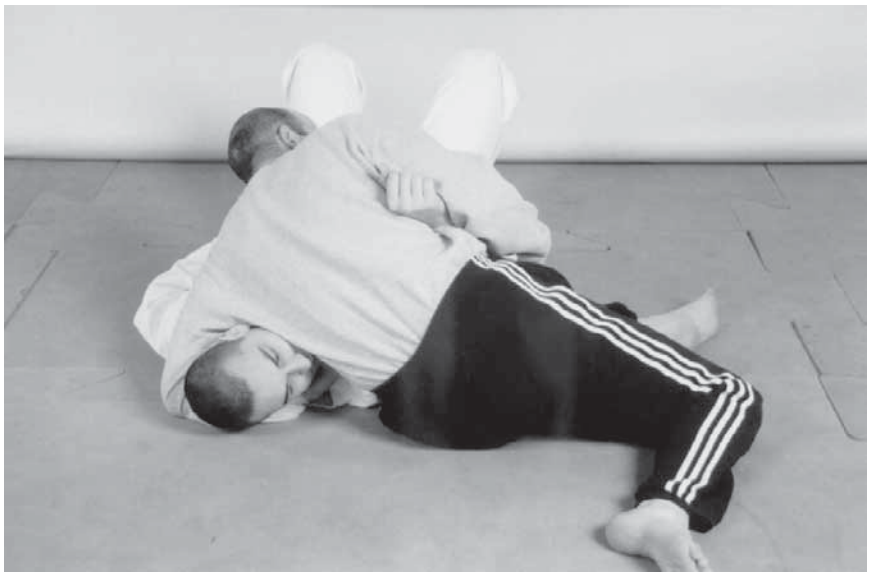


The Side Four Quarter

The Scarf Hold

The Jack-Knife

Reverse Scarf Hold



Upper 4 /14 Pin

Introduction

Many people underestimate the potency of the bars and locks, mostly because they have only seen and not felt them in the controlled arena or contest arena. Certainly from a spectator's point of view, the arm bar goes on and the opponent taps out - and that's about the end of it. In reality, on the pavement arena the opponent will not tap out and, if you have the desire you can literally snap off the opponent's limbs like twigs.

One of my friends in Coventry, a renowned Judoka, was once cornered by an unsuspecting youth down a dark alley. My friend had already told the chap that he did not want to fight and then tried to walk away, his assailant, sure that he was on to a winner because my friend refused to fight, gave chase and tried to force the issue. Seconds later he had a broken leg and two broken arms. This is the prowess of the Kansetsu-waza (Joint locks). I'd be lying if I told you that many of the joint locks are advanced ground fighting techniques that will need many hours of flight time to perfect, but that's OK,we

don't really want them to be easy to learn otherwise everyone will be good at them.

That's what I really like about the ground fighting in general, it is so physically and mentally demanding that only a very small percentage of those that start the journey into the labyrinths of the ground will actually finish the journey. Most will stop and turn back at the very first hurdle, those that do stay the course and acquire the knowledge will therefore be special people. The knowledge only really goes to those that pay the price, in the world of real the price can be very high but the final product will be a polished and empirical vehicle that will ride high and proud on the roads of contemporary violence.

It is my opinion that the veteran ground fighter is potentate amongst the melée of other combatants, that is not to say that I do not rate other forms of fighting, it is just that I have practiced many and the most demanding and yet satisfying of them all, the one that gave me the most confidence when reality reared its ugly head was the ground fighting. We have a paradox here because, whilst I sit here at the computer,

cup of tea in hand (just finished a couple of toasted tea cakes, actually) telling you of the prowess of the ground fighter and my love for the ground fighting arts I know that, should a fight kick off when I nip into the city today it will be the punching range that I seek and 95 % of the time that is where I will finish the altercation, usually with my opponent unconscious. Even though the ground is where most fights end up, it is not where they start, they start at conversation range, which is punching range.

If you can maintain this range with the use of a fence (see *Three Second Fighter* book/video) and attack the attacker from there with a pre-emptive strike (working on the premise that you have already lost the option of flight and cannot verbally defuse the situation) the fight will end, clinically, and usually in seconds, from where it started. Unfortunately most people do not operate from a fence and they will not, for whatever reason, become pre-emptive so the fight usually always goes through vertical grappling and hits the ground in a hurry. This is when (and why) the ground fighting knowledge is a God send.

Whilst this may all seem peripheral to what we are teaching within this series it is not, it is the ground fighting knowledge that allows me the confidence to commit my attacks from the vertical range. Many people do not completely commit their attacks because they are worried about getting grabbed and going to ground (because they are ill prepared) so they under commit and are chased and grabbed anyway, *et voila* - you're in grappling range.

Other fighters, the over confident ones that believe they are too good at their own range to be taken to the floor, don't practice ground fighting for this reason. They either over commit their techniques believing that they cannot fail, or freeze when the opponent smacks them in the teeth and they realise that reality is not a Jacky Chan Movie (no disrespect Jackie) rather it is a mouth full of blood and a monster that can cure constipation and doesn't give a monkeys **ck how many dans you hold, or how many punches you can throw in one second, or how many competitions you have won. He also ends up on the deck with the teeth of adversity biting his nose from his face. And a road digger from hell with ten pints of larger and three E's

in him will give anyone of any standard the hardest five minutes of their life if they are not switched on.

The untrained fighter is the most unpredictable fighter on the planet, he will not fight to a pattern and will not respond to many of the tricks that work against the indoctrinated gym fighter, he will wear the broken nose you give him like a badge of battle - and still carry on, and if he beats you he will beat you bad, literally kicking you in the head until some one steps forward to stop him or he stops from sheer exhaustion. So when we fight the monster on the street we have to be a bigger animal than he, and we need to know techniques that will and can destroy if we want them to. The saddest people that I have met are people that say 'Oh no, I wouldn't use that technique' as though biting or butting are below them, these are the people that are going to really struggle when the shit hits the fan because they are so ill prepared and so out of date that they will be blasted off the planet by an enemy that will hit them so hard with their own morality that they will go back in time and when they wake up their clothes will be out of fashion, but at least then their clothes might match their concepts.

Sorry, I went off on a tangent there, but many of the techniques in this series are as brutal as they are immediate - ignore them at your own peril.

Just to reiterate, although these techniques are a little complex at times stick with them and work them hard, eventually they will not seem difficult. Rather they will seem not easy but obvious and will get you out of many a difficult situation. As with the chokes and strangles in the last volume of this series the bars and locks can be used either to control or to destroy, when the lock is secured the choice, as they say, will be entirely yours. Care must be taken, and control learned, when practising in the controlled arena, it is very easy for these techniques to break limbs without intention, when the opponent taps out release immediately. It is not good form to bend or squeeze a little more after the opponent has tapped, you do it to him and he'll probably do just the same to you. Where you release to the tap in a controlled fight you snap in a real fight (or you have the choice to snap), and where you gently bend the limb in the controlled arena you wrench at speed out side.

Note: There are several bars that can be employed from your back, and from a kneeling position, in order to keep the books in the series categorical. I have not entered them in this text, they will be covered in detail in *Fighting From Your Knees* and *Fighting From Your Back*.

Chapter One

From the Mount position

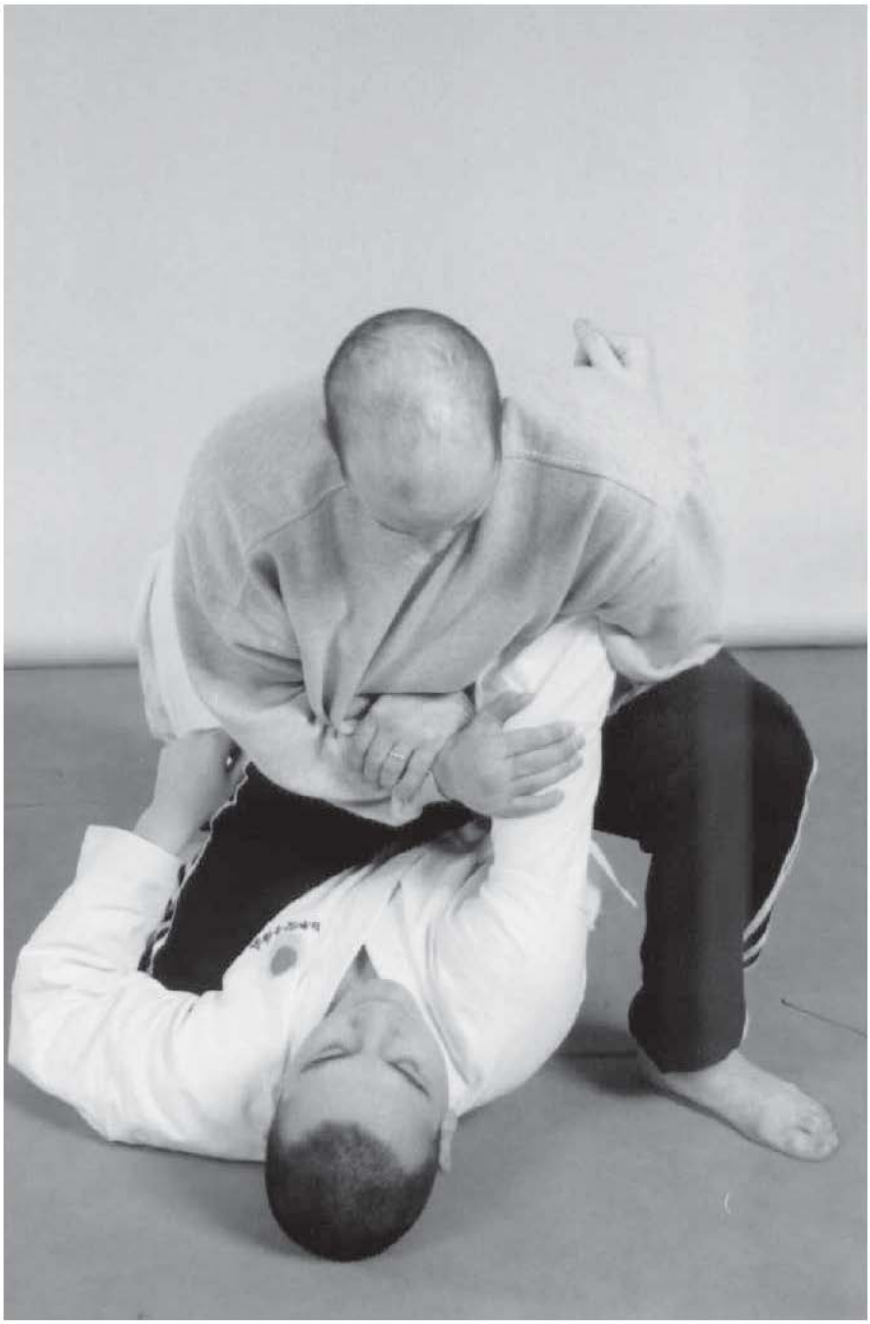
As I have stated in every book in this series, the mount position is probably the most potent pin of them all with many finishing possibilities, and easy access to the standing position should you require. Basically the pin is best employed as a podium from which to attack and turn the opponent for the devastating reverse mount strangle (see *Chokes and Strangles*). There are, however, one or two very fast arm bars that are very accessible from the mount and that can end an altercation in a split second - they need plenty of practise and a 'feel' (a 'feel' is an intangible thing that cannot really be taught, rather the practitioner has to earn it with hundreds of hours flight time) needs to be found to really make them work.

In the controlled arena, when the fights are all out with very few holds barred, 50% of my victories come via the arm bar (the other 50% Approx. come via the choke and strangle), ironically the opponent feeds the arm to you on the majority of occasions in his bid to attack you or to escape. The best

techniques are the ones that the opponent gives you (inadvertently) and not those that you have to force. I generally precede my arm bars with a strike, this distracts the opponent giving me a blind second to take the bar.

The Grapevine

In all honesty I do not find this a very strong bar but it can work on some people so it is worth a mention, it is also a good way of tying an opponent's arm off so that you can hit him with your free hand, it's very hard for an opponent to defend his face with only one arm. The grapevine works really well whilst the opponent is compliant, ie in drilling work, but when compliancy is taken away most opponent's manage to struggle free after a few seconds, though that may be all you need to destroy an opponent from this position. Again we are not chasing this technique rather we are waiting for the opponent to offer it to us, this he will do in the form of grabbing or attempted striking. As his left arm (or right) grabs at your collar/shirt etc. wrap your left arm around it at the elbow, from your left to your right, so that his hand is palm up under your arm-pit, grab your left with your right hand and lean back and place pressure on his elbow joint.



Shoulder lock

Grab the opponent's outstretched left arm with your right hand to pin in place, turn your body to your own right and sit through to your right with your left foot, simultaneously grip the opponent's arm with your left hand also. This will turn the opponent onto his side. From here sit slightly forward so that your weight is on his straightened arm, this will place pressure on his elbow joint, if you pull back hard on his arm it will break the elbow joint.

Straight sitting arm bar

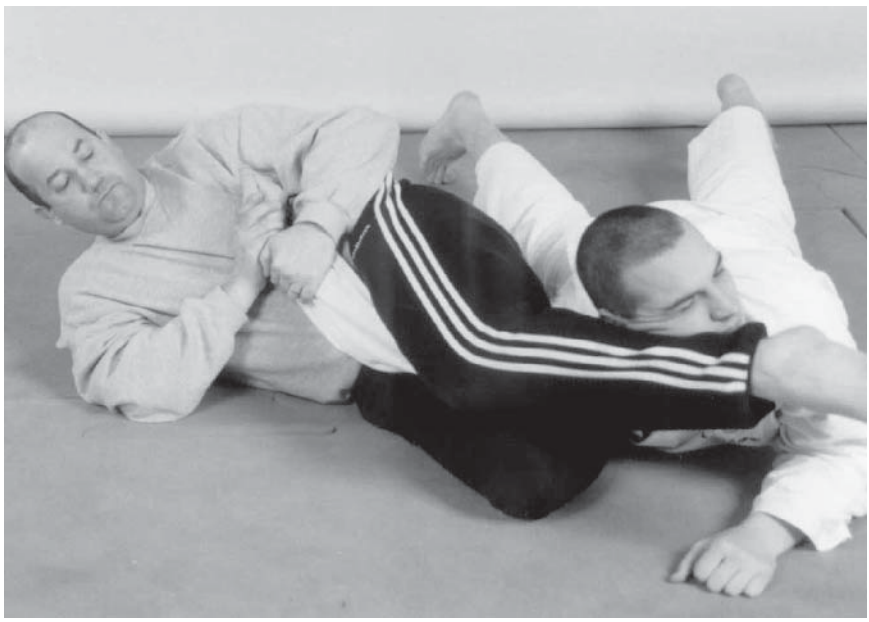
From the shoulder lock position you have the option to sit backwards so that the opponent's outstretched arm is between your legs and your feet are across his face, as per illustration. Pull down on his arm (it should be either palm up or little finger up for best effect) and push up against his elbow joint with your hips, to snap the joint yank down sharply with your hands and push sharply up with your hips.

Roll Forward

If you roll him a little more forward and sit your weight on his shoulder it will move the lock to a shoulder lock that, if forced will take the shoulder out of joint.

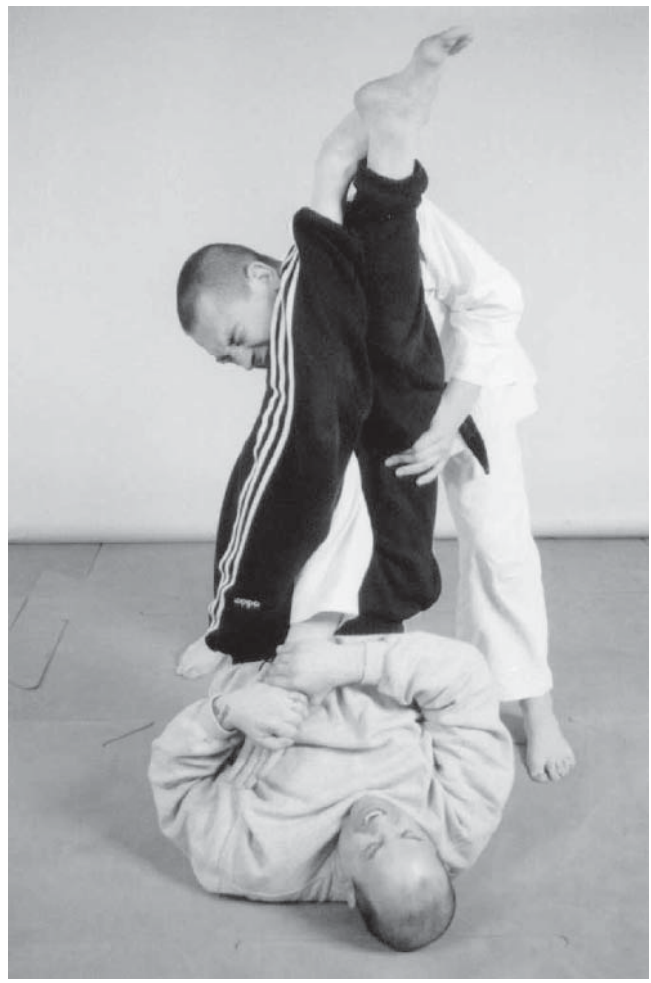
Reverse arm bar

If you roll completely forward so that you are on your belly, still gripping his straightened arm with both hands, you fall automatically into a reverse arm bar. For best effect hook your left foot in front of the opponent's face and pull back on his arm - you'll know when it is on, he'll shout the house down.



Standing arm bar

The opponent often tries to stand from this position, if the lock is on he will not be able to. If it is not completely on he will probably try, keep hold of his arm and keep your feet in the same position and wrench his arm back across your hip, against his elbow joint.



Straight sitting arm bar

From standing arm bar you can force the opponent over onto his back and into the straight sitting arm bar position, infact if you get the standing lock on this is probably the way he will want to go to try and escape the pain (or onto his belly where the reverse arm bar will automatically be on anyway). Push your left foot against his face so that his head is forced backwards, simultaneously pull back on the opponent's arm, this will unsettle his balance and force him to fall to his back. His outstretched arm will be between your legs and your feet are across his face, as per illustration. Pull down on his arm (it should be either palm up or little finger up for best effect) and push up against his elbow joint with your hips, to snap the joint yank down sharply with your hands and push sharply up with your hips.

Full Juji Gatame (Arm bar)

In the same fashion as the other locks first grip the opponent's left arm with your right hand, sit through with your left leg and fall to your back, still gripping his arm, but now with both hands, his hand should be palm up. His outstretched arm will be between your legs and your feet across his face, as per illustration. Pull down on his arm (it should be either palm up or little finger up for best effect) and push up against his elbow joint with your hips, to snap the joint yank down sharply with your hands and push sharply up with your hips.

Roll through

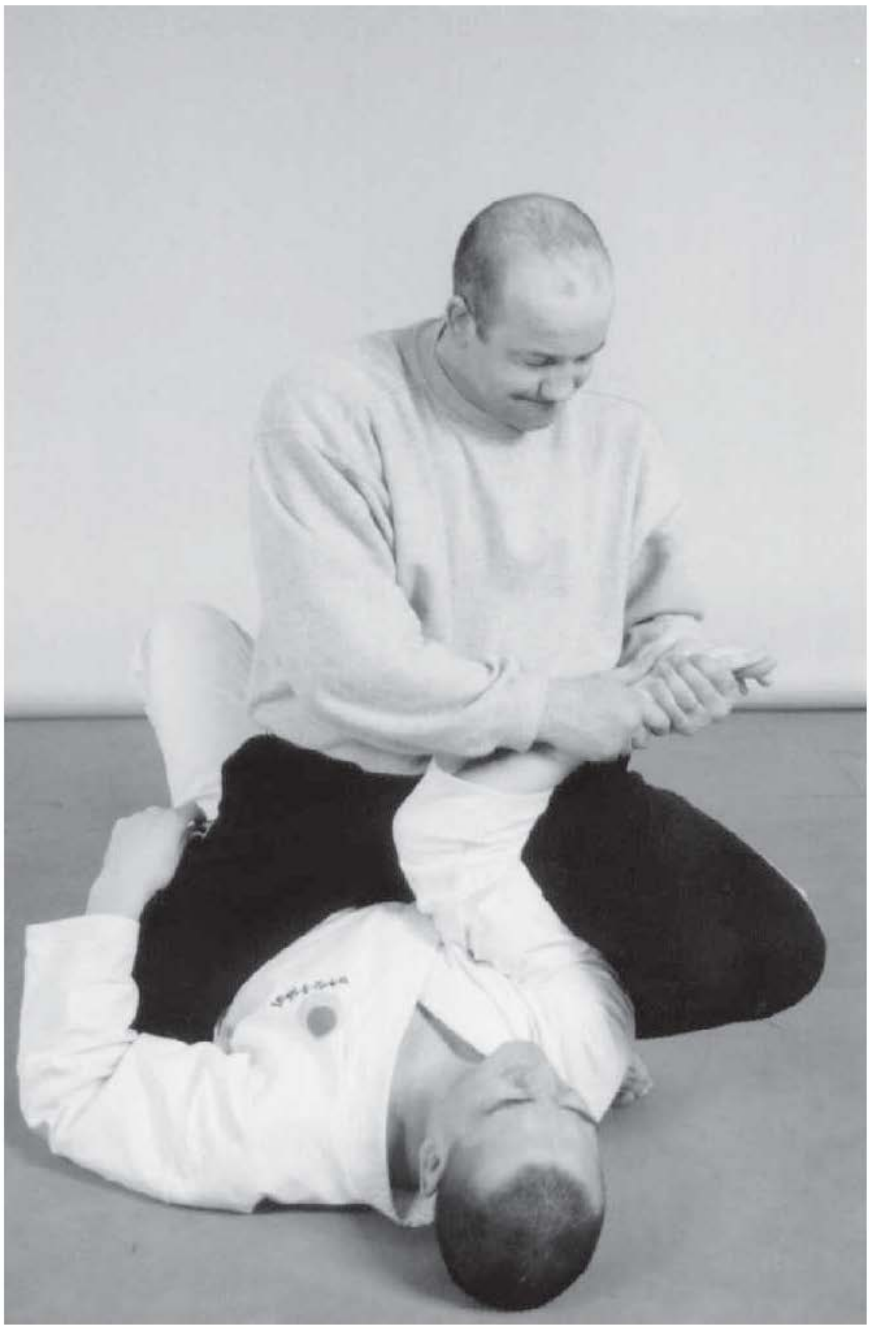
If the opponent rolls as you go for the lock and resists so that you cannot complete the bar don't fight too hard for it just go with the flow and roll with him so that you are on your belly and his arm is in the reverse arm bar position. Pull the arm back and push your hips forward against his elbow.

The same as the other techniques, if the opponent stands you can utilise the standing bar by pulling his arm across your hip or force him back to the sitting arm bar by pushing your foot across his face and wrenching on his arm.

Triangular arm twist

As detailed in Vol 3 chokes and strangles and in Vol One the pins, an excellent method of turning the opponent onto his belly is by knocking his arm across his body and lying on it, trapping it across his neck with your chest, then feeding your left arm under his head, from your left to your right, and grabbing his trapped hand and pulling it under his head to turn him over. What sometimes happens is the opponent stops you from pulling the arm under his head by pulling it behind his head. From this position pull the hand in an anti-clock wise direction, towards your own chest with your left hand and pushing his elbow in the same direction with your right hand, this will make the bar.

Sometimes it is possible to take finger bars and wrist locks from this position, as it is from most positions. Basically whenever the opponent's hands are in range you can attack the fingers and wrists. I will cover these in a later chapter. These are, really, rainy day techniques that I do not look for but neither do I pass up if they are offered, they are especially good when trying to break an opponent's grip.



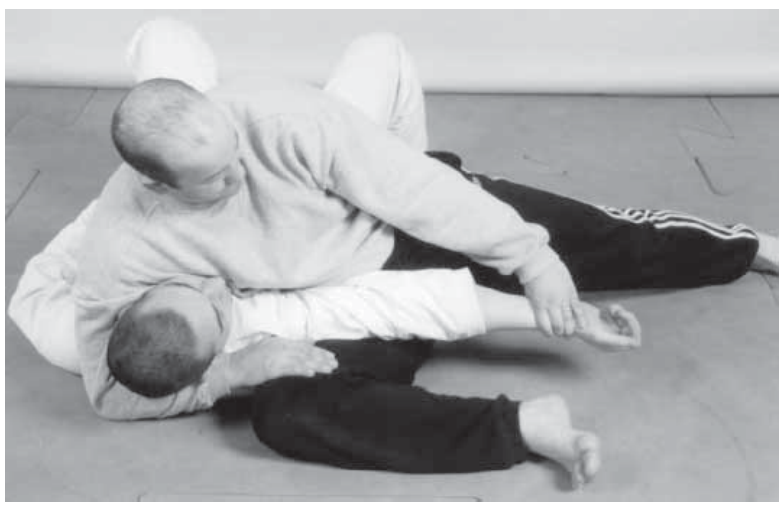
Chapter Two

From the Scarf Hold

Some of the bars and locks in this chapter were touched on/ covered in *Pins: The Bedrock* but because I cannot presume that the reader has read that volume I shall repeat them here also. If you did read that volume please accept my apologies for repeating (though of course they do stand repeating).

If the opponent's right arm gets free from under your left arm you can use one of several bars and locks.

1) Bar it over your right leg. Push his right arm, at the elbow and palm up, across your right thigh.



2) Bar it over your left leg. If his arm will not straighten switch legs to create a higher fulcrum by bringing your left leg through and pushing your right leg back and bar it over your left leg.

3) Back to right leg bar. If the opponent is still struggling then quickly switch back your legs and drive his arm, at the elbow joint, into/over the lower fulcrum of your right leg.

4) Left leg tie off. Tie his arm off under your reverse/left leg, to bar the turn lift your hips up to the ceiling and push.

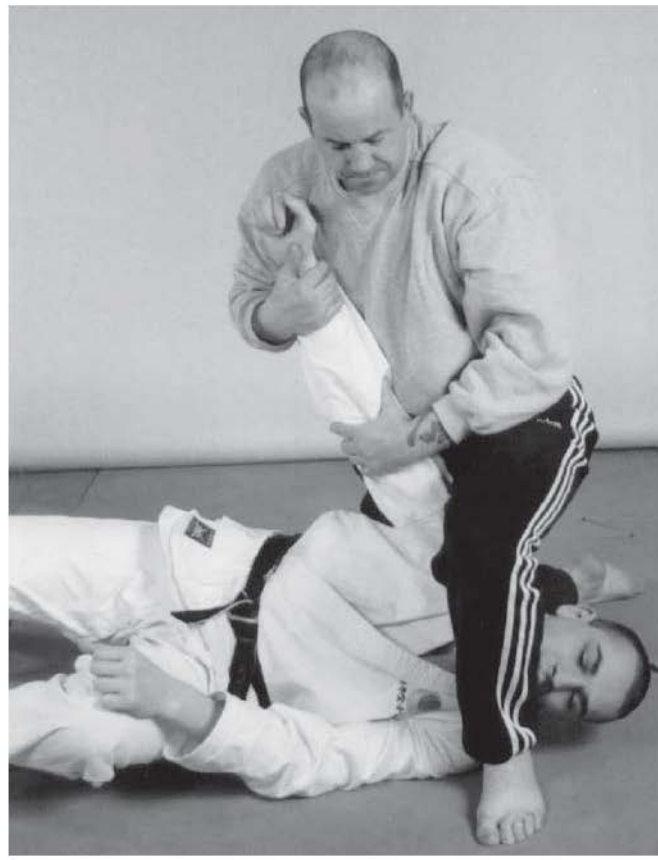
5) Right leg tie off. In his bid to stop you tying off his arm under your left leg the opponent may direct his energy towards your right leg, if so quickly tie it off under your right leg, to make the lock more secure and painful wrap your left leg around the foot of your left leg and pull back with your left leg.

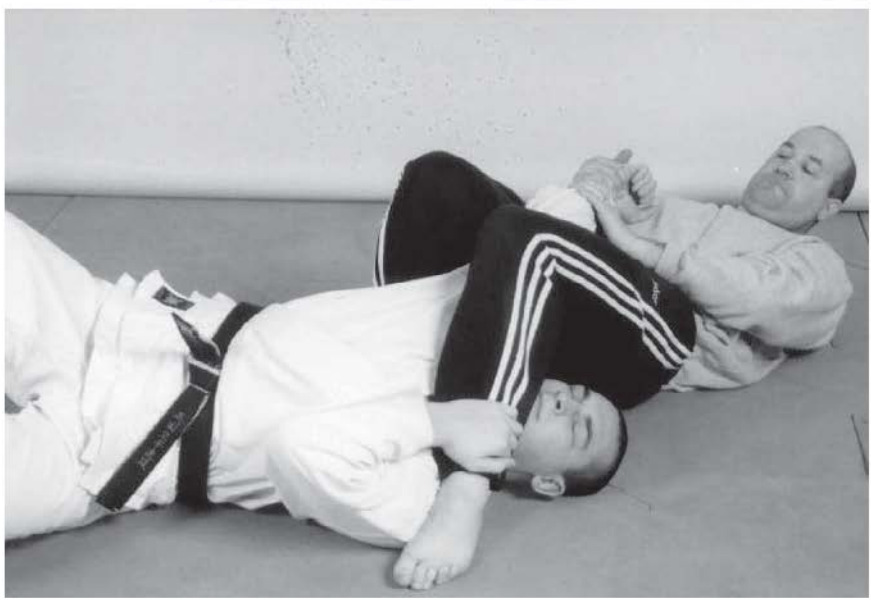
Juji Gatame (arm bar)

Release your right arm from under the opponent's head and place it straight out in front of you. Step across the opponent's body and place your left foot at the left (far) side of his head. At the same time bring your right leg to the right side of his body and bring your right arm back to grip his right arm, ensure that at all times you keep control of his right arm with your left and right.

Sit back and trap the opponent's head with your left leg, simultaneously wedge your right foot underneath his body at his right hand side. His arm is between your legs, pull down on his arm and push up with your hips to complete the bar.

This is a very difficult position to take the arm bar from, much practise will be needed to make it smooth, once you have the technique however you will catch many opponents.





Jack-knife escape into arm bar

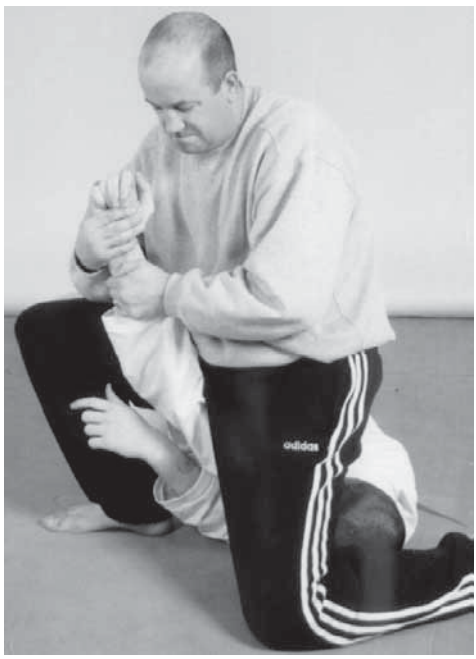
Again the jack-knife escape is detailed heavily in Volume 2 of this series, Escapes, and should be referred to for finer detail. Separate your chest from your opponent's back whilst simultaneously poking him in the throat with your left hand to force him backwards.

As he falls onto his back he will probably keep hold of the head lock he has on you (if he has any sense at all). At this point you will be kneeling at the opponent's side. Place your right foot over his head and base it on the floor by the left side of his face. Poke your finger in his eye to get him to release his grip from your head, as he does his arm will straighten.

Lie onto your back and trap the opponent's head with your left leg, simultaneously wedge your right foot underneath his body at his right hand side. His arm is between your legs, pull down on his arm and push up with your hips to complete the bar.

Shoulder Lock

It is also an option from the kneeling position to take a forward shoulder lock. Force the opponent's arm straight, same as before, by punching him in the face or poking his eyes/face/throat with your fingers until he releases. When he does his arm will straighten, step over his body with your right leg and kneel across his face with your left leg, sit forward onto the arm to make the hold.



Reverse Arm Bar

If the opponent forces you forward onto your belly, or you wish to go forward onto your belly to take the reverse arm bar, fall forward being sure to keep control of the opponent's arm and force your left foot in front of his face, pull his arm into your body to make the lock. If he tries to stand up you can, again, follow and execute a standing arm bar or force the opponent over onto his back for the sitting arm bar. One hold very much runs into another - if you go with the flow the opponent will not escape the lock (unless his arm breaks of course).

Chapter Three

From the upper 4 1/4 pin

This is not my favourite place to take arm bars from, I use the pin more as a travellers rest hold. Having watched a lot of the American shoot fighting (this is very much all out fighting where compliancy is rarer than a tax rebate) they very much favour taking the arm bars from the upper 4 1/4 position, especially the Juji Gatame arm bar, and they are expert at it too. Other excellent ground fighters like the brilliant Neil Adams also take the arms bars, especially Juji Gatame from just about every position you could think of. But these fighters are innovators who constantly break tradition to find new concepts and better techniques. There is nothing stopping you (who ever you are) doing exactly the same.

Tradition is great for acquiring a firm foundation, but sometimes you have to break down the walls of conventional acceptance if you want to be different, to be better. When I first left the KUGB, with whom I had been, on and off, for twenty years, lots of people slagged me off and said that I had sold out (though funnily enough I do not remember any of them actually saying that to my face) and that I had lost my

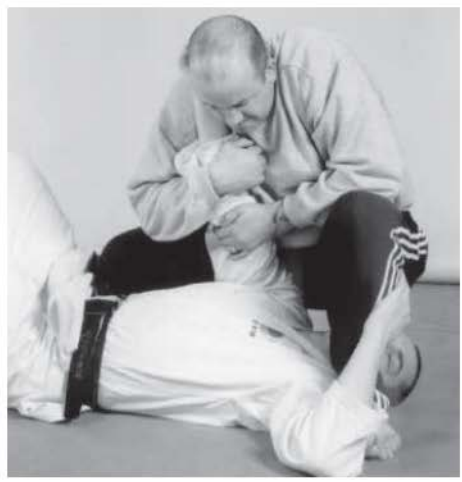
way etc. But I had the confidence in myself and in what I was doing to cope with that criticism because I knew that they were wrong and that it was spread by jealous people who wanted to do what I had done but didn't have the moral fibre (most of them couldn't even spell it).

Now I never left the KUGB because it was a bad association, infact I think that it is one of the finest associations in the world run by some of the finest martial artists in the world (just put my cheque in the post lads), I didn't leave because I was a disgruntled member; on the contrary, the standards were high and everyone was happy with it. I left because I had found my own direction, my own way and so I followed my heart and did my own thing, as I am still doing today. But if I had stayed where I was because of the locals that thought I was selling out I'd have still been an average Karate man in a very big association - change is sense not sacrilege. So break a few rules, search for new techniques, explore, expand and get exited about how much there is out there to learn - my only worry now is whether my life time is going to be long enough to fit in all the things that I haven't quite learned yet. I digress-the upper 4 1/4.

Juji Gatame

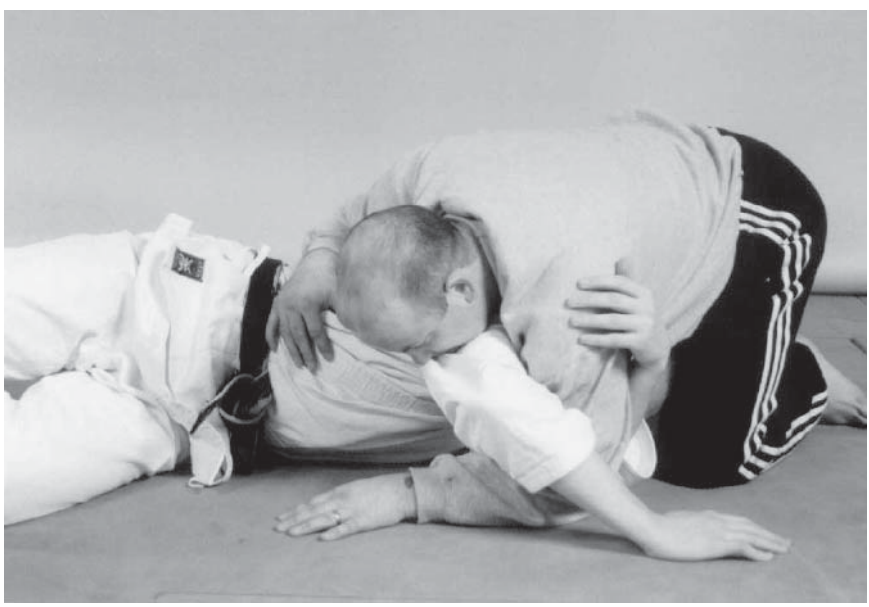
Rather than take the arm bar from the conventional upper 4 1/4, this would make for slow movement, come to a crouching position over the opponent, as illus. He will feed one arm or the other to try and escape (if he feeds both you have a choice as to whether to go to the left or the right). If he feeds his right arm then take hold of it with your left hand and quickly turn to your own right and place your left leg over his face and plant it next to the right side of his head.

Lie onto your back and trap the opponent's head with your left leg, simultaneously wedge your right foot underneath his body at his left hand side. His arm will be between your legs, pull down on his arm and push up with your hips to complete the bar. If he rolls forward to block the bar roll with him onto your own belly and execute the reverse arm bar, if he stands up take the standing arm bar or force him over on to his back and into the conventional juji Gatame. If the opponent feeds the opposite arm, when you are in the upper 4 1/4 go the opposite way and reverse the latter instructions.



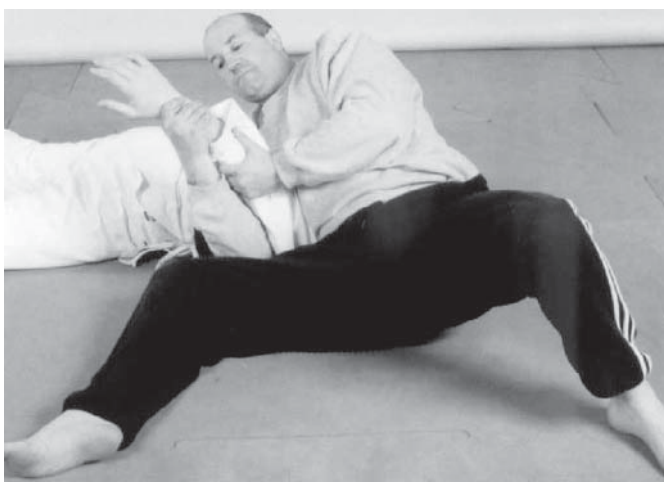
Turn and Bar

If, when holding the opponent in the upper 4 1/4, he turns onto his belly loop your right arm (or left) under his left armpit and pull him over on to his back, place your left leg over his face and plant it next to the right side of his head. Lie onto your back and trap the opponent's head with your left leg, simultaneously wedge your right foot underneath his body at his left hand side. His arm will be between your legs, pull down on his arm and push up with your hips to complete the bar. The usual extras, reverse arm bar, standing arm bar and force down into sitting arm bar also apply if the opponent feeds you the necessary energy.



Arm-pit shoulder bar

Again, if the opponent rolls onto his belly in a bid to escape hook his left arm under the elbow with your right arm and sit though into the reverse scarf hold position, only with your arms on the out side as opposed to around his neck. Sit on all your weight so that your left arm pit is across his left shoulder. As you sit your weight on his shoulder pull up with both hands on his outstretched arm, keep his palm downward. This can be taken to either side of the opponent.



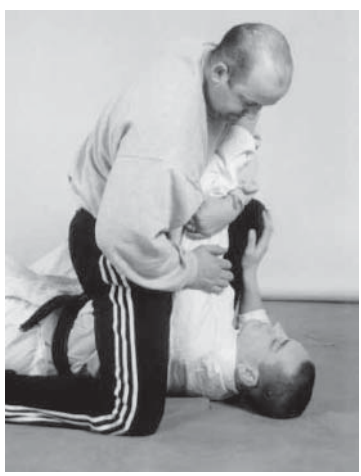
Reverse mount Juji Gatame

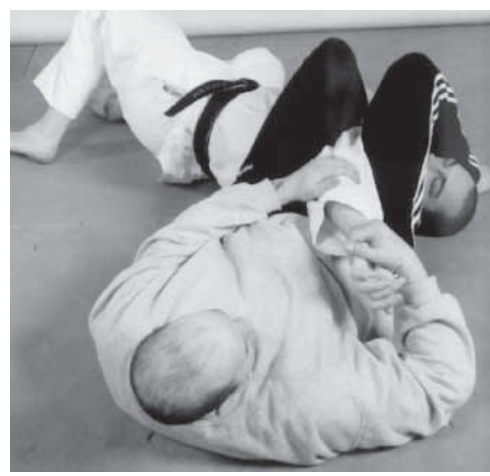
If the opponent rolls onto his belly quickly spin around onto his back and take the reverse mount position, allow him a little room so that he is tempted to try and turn back onto his back. As he does, take his left arm (right arm if he tries to turn from the opposite side) and pull him to his back, as he turns place your left leg over his face and plant it next to the right side of his head.

Lie onto your back and trap the opponent's head with your left leg, simultaneously wedge your right foot underneath his body at his left hand side. His arm will be between your legs, pull down on his arm and push up with your hips to complete the bar. The usual extras, reverse arm bar, standing arm bar and force down into sitting arm bar also apply if the opponent feeds you the necessary energy. Alternatively if the opponent does not take the bait and turn but tries to push into a kind of press up position to escape then, again, take his left arm (or right arm) and pull him to his back, as he turns place your left leg over his face and plant it next to the right side of his head.

Front mount arm bar

Spin from the upper 4 1/4 position into the mount position. Whichever arm the opponent feeds you take and sit through, as pre described, into the conventional juji Gatame from the mount position. If you spin to the mount from the left, try and take the opponent's left arm (or if spinning from the right his right arm) so that you can use the momentum of the spin to take the bar fast and smooth.





Chapter Four

From the side 4 1/4 pin

This is another traveller's rest hold that is better suited as a resting place. It is very easy to defend and excellent for getting to the more potent mount position or even the scarf hold, however there are some bars that can be taken from this position (see also *Chokes and Strangles* in this series).

Juji Gatame (arm bar)

First come to the shortened version of the side 4 1/4 (knees up), catch hold of his right arm with your right hand and place your left leg over his face, making sure that your leg goes underneath his right arm, and plant it next to the right side of his head. Keep control of his arm at all times. Lie onto your back and trap the opponent's head with your left leg, simultaneously wedge your right foot underneath his body at his left hand side. His arm will be between your legs, pull down on his arm and push up with your hips to complete the bar. The usual extras, reverse arm bar, standing arm bar and force down into sitting arm bar also apply if the opponent

feeds you the necessary energy. As with taking the bar from the scarf hold taking it from the side 4 1/4 is an advanced technique that will need many hours of flight time to perfect.

Figure 4 arm lock

Reach over and grab the opponent's left wrist (his palm facing up) with your left hand, feed your right arm underneath his left arm and grip your own left wrist, as per illus. Force his wrist down to the floor with your left hand and force his elbow off the floor and backwards with your right arm to make the lock. This is more of a way of locking the opponent's arm than anything else but it can also act as a good bar if you get the grip.

It is worth remembering however that, if the bar is not on and it is not causing the opponent discomfort, then all you are doing is pinning him and in doing so you are also tying up your own arms when they could be doing something more potent.

Figure 4 to straight arm bar

In his struggle to escape the figure 4 the opponent's energy often forces his arm straight. If this is the case let his arm straighten and, using the grip that you already hold, bar his arm at his elbow joint by pushing down on his wrist with your left hand and forcing up against his elbow joint with your right arm.

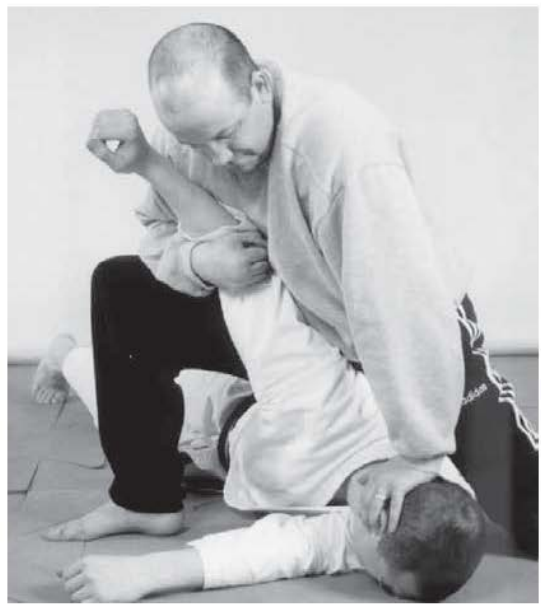
Side 4 1/4 to mount arm bar

Sit through into the mount position, as you do so grab the opponent's left arm and sit straight through to the otherside by placing your right leg over his face and plant it next to the right side of his head. Keep control of his arm at all times. Lie onto your back and trap the opponent's head with your left leg, simultaneously wedge your right foot underneath his body at his left hand side. His arm will be between your legs, pull down on his arm and push up with your hips to complete the bar. If, when you sit into the mount position, the opponent feeds you his opposite arm then take the bar the opposite way, to your own left instead of your own right, and simply reverse the latter instructions. The usual extras, reverse arm bar, standing arm bar and force down into sitting arm bar also apply if the opponent feeds you the necessary energy.

Reverse Mount arm bar

If, when holding the opponent in the side 4 1/4, he turns onto his belly (this is very usual with many inexperienced ground fighters. They see this as a good means of escape where as in actuality it is the worst thing they can do if they are fighting someone with ground fighting knowledge) sit onto his back in the reverse mount and loop your right arm (or left) under his left arm-pit and pull him over onto his back, as he does so place your left leg over his face and plant it next to the right side of his head.

Lie onto your back and trap the opponent's head with your left leg, simultaneously wedge your right foot underneath his body at his left hand side. His arm will be between your legs, pull down on his arm and push up with your hips to complete the bar. The usual extras, reverse arm bar, standing arm bar and force down into sitting arm bar also apply if the opponent feeds you the necessary energy.



Arm-pit shoulder bar

Again, if the opponent rolls onto his belly in a bid to escape, hook his left arm under his elbow with your right arm and sit through into the reverse scarf hold position, only with your arms on the outside as opposed to around his neck. Sit all your weight so that your left arm-pit is across his left shoulder. As you sit your weight on his shoulder pull up with both hands on his outstretched arm, keep his palm downward.

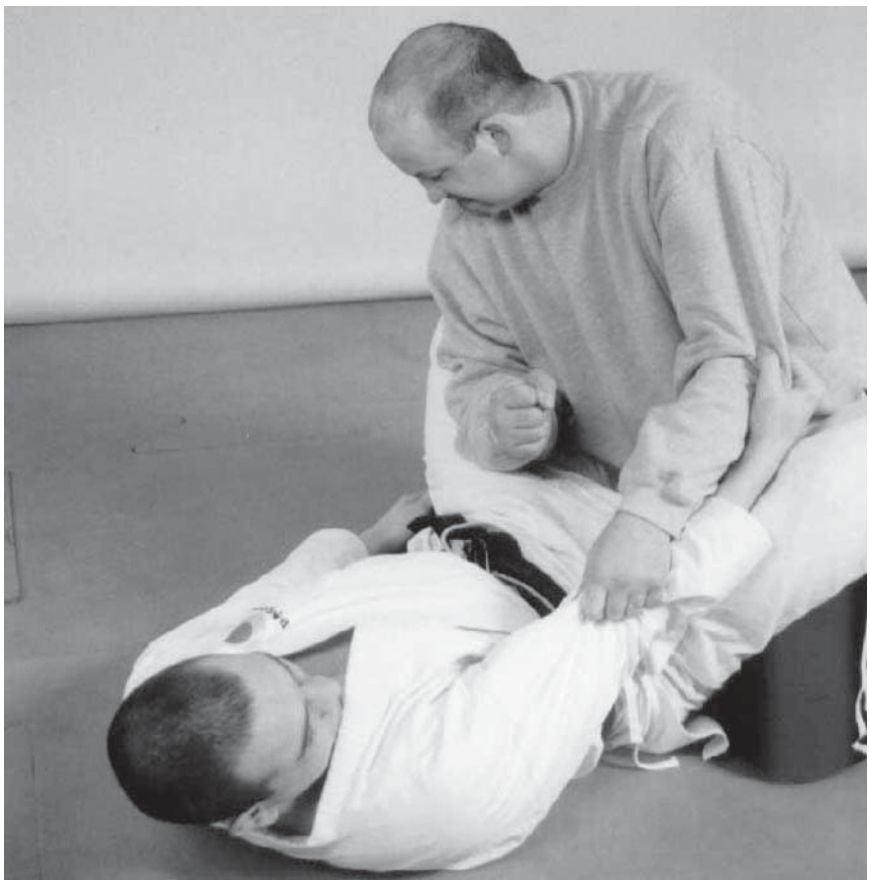
Chapter Five

Leg Bars from the opponent's scissor guard

A very familiar place to end up in is the opponent's scissor guard. A good ground fighter can hold an opponent here for a very long time, appropriately the scissor guard is also the innate safety mechanism used by fighters in a street situation who find themselves on their backs. When the opponent locks his legs around your waist it can be a very difficult place from which to escape. An experienced ground fighter will use a scissor guard to rest and also to force an impatient fighter to make a mistake. When he does he'll take advantage and finish the fight from his back with arm bars, chokes, turns etc (as detailed in *Fighting from your Back*). There are one or two reliable escapes from the opponent's scissor guard that will enable you to attack his legs with locks and bars, or climb through into the mount position and finish from there. With practise it is possible to break an opponent's limbs with the following locks but, from my experience, it takes a lot of flight time to get it right so practise is the imperative once again.

Inner Thigh attack

Bring your right (or left) arm forward towards the opponent's head and then sharply back so that your elbow strikes sharply into the nerve point on the opponent's inner thigh, this will break his guard. Alternatively you can use your thumb to press the nerve and get the same effect. The nerve is only small and is situated right in the centre of the inner thigh, so it may take a few strikes to get it on the button, keep striking or poking until his guard is broken.

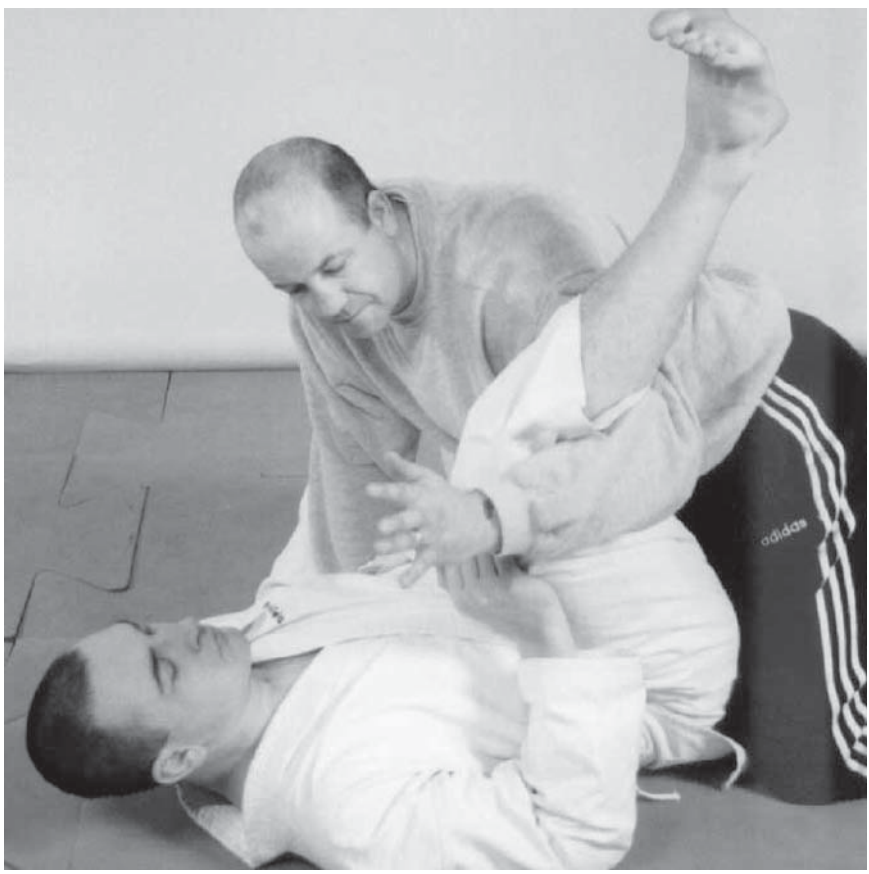


Groin attack

Reach down to the opponent's groin and poke your thumb into his ingual canal. This is situated about an inch to the left and an inch higher than the pubic bone, both sides (right at the top of the thigh by the groin area), again this is usually good for breaking down the guard. If you cannot find it then grab the opponent by the testicles and squeeze and pull and rip, this will move his guard down.

Leg sweep

Force your right arm (or left) between the opponent's legs (at your right hand side) and sweep the opponent's legs over and past your head then move down into the side 4 1/4 pin. This is not an easy technique, but it is one that does work on some opponents. It can be used in conjunction with the others, ie. strike the opponent's inner thigh and as his guard breaks push your arm through and sweep his legs around to the side.

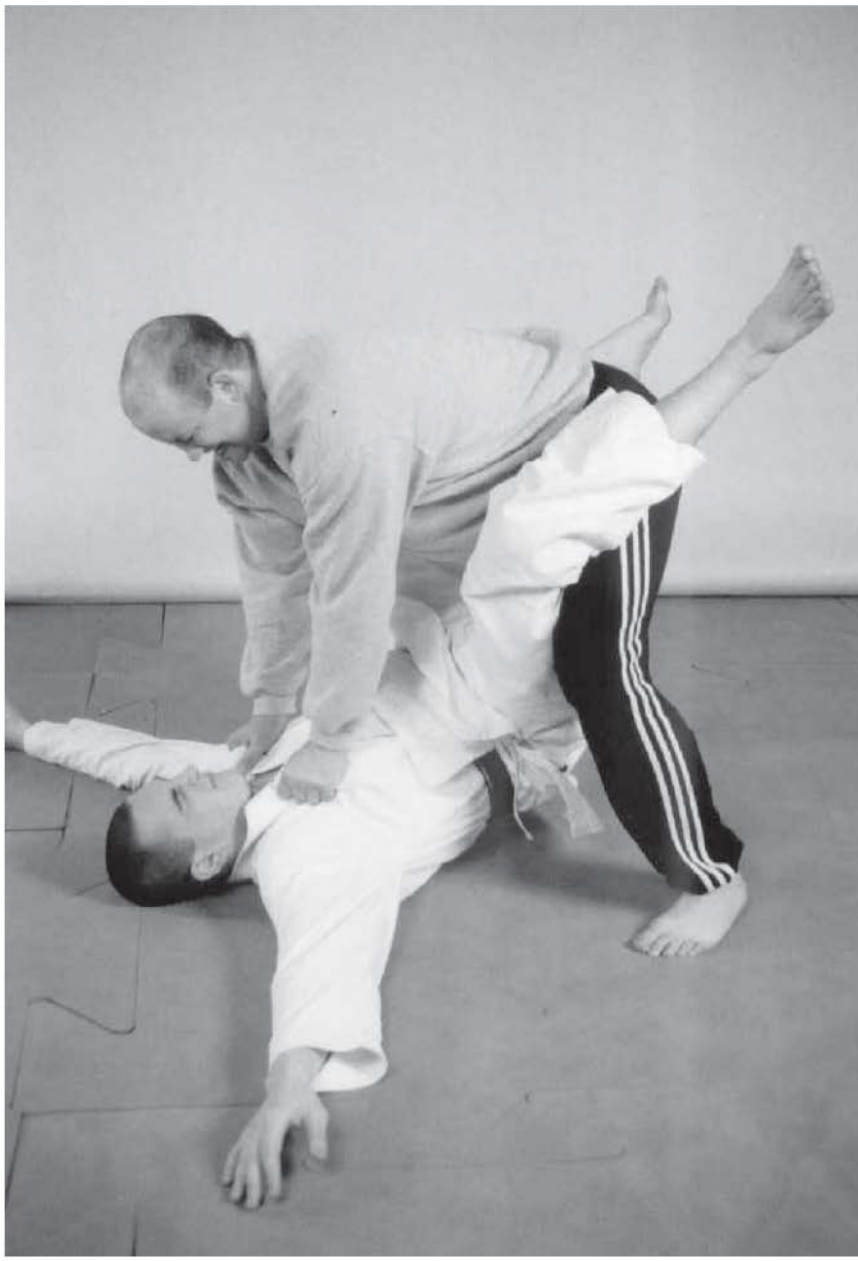


Leg Bars from the opponent's scissor guard

Back slam

If you are struggling to break the opponent's guard you can use the back slam, though this does take an awful lot of back and leg strength. Reach through and grab the opponent's lapels (or any appendage) with both hands, stand up lifting the opponent and slam his back into the floor. (this would work particularly well in the street scenario if you could drop the opponent onto an uneven surface like a curb etc). This will knock the wind out of him and force his guard to break, often the opponent will break his guard as soon as you lift him off the ground.

Leg Bars from the opponent's scissor guard

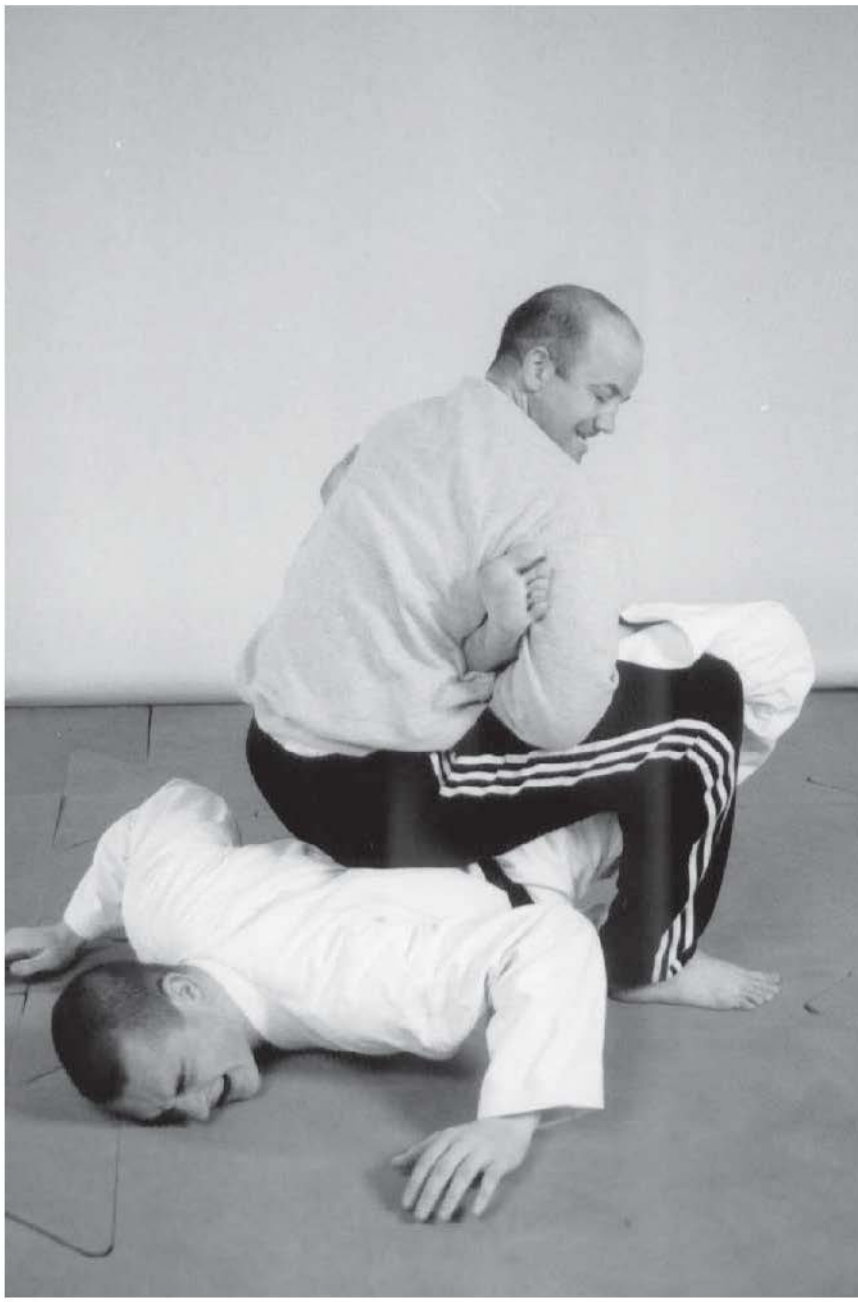


Boston Crab

Although you will have seen this technique probably a thousand times on the show wrestling on TV and thought nothing of it because show wrestling is often seen as unrealistic, this technique is actually a very dangerous and effective move. It was the favourite finishing technique of the legendary English wrestler Bert Asarati, who had over seven thousand bouts and held the British Title for 25 years.

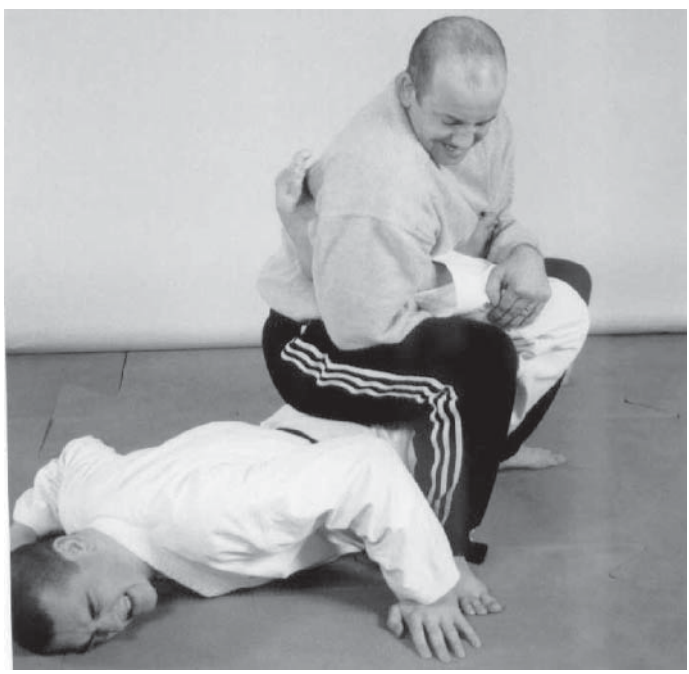
Grab the opponent's legs, from the outside in and round the back of his knees, with both arms and stand up, force the opponent, to your right (or left), onto his belly and step over his back with your left leg, sit onto his back and pull back hard on his legs. Be very careful in training otherwise there will be discs popping out all over the place. Never fall back onto the opponent's back otherwise you might easily break it. If you let go of the legs you are already in a vertical position whilst the opponent is still on the floor.

Leg Bars from the opponent's scissor guard



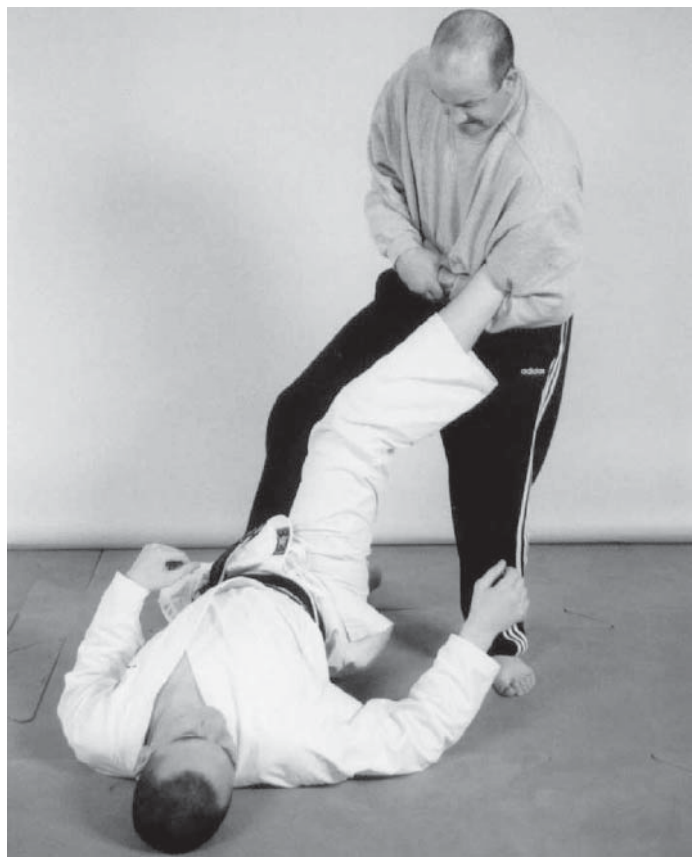
Half Boston crab

The same applies with the Half Boston Crab, only now you are using only one of the opponent legs (either one will do). Grab the opponent's right leg with your left arm underneath the knee so that his foot is under your arm-pit, couple your left and right hand to secure the hold. Force him onto his belly, step over his back with your left leg, sit onto his back and pull back hard on his leg. Again be very careful in training otherwise there will be discs popping out all over the place, never fall back onto the opponent's back otherwise you might easily break it. If you let go of the legs you are already in a vertical position whilst the opponent is still on the floor.



Standing ankle bar

Grab the opponent's right leg with your left arm so that the bone of the wrist is across the ankle bone (or the Achilles tendon or even the calf muscle), couple your left and your right hand to make the hold stronger. The opponent's foot should be under your arm-pit. Lean back and force the wrist of your left arm hard against the opponent's ankle. If the opponent struggles from here you have the option to turn him into the Half Boston Crab.

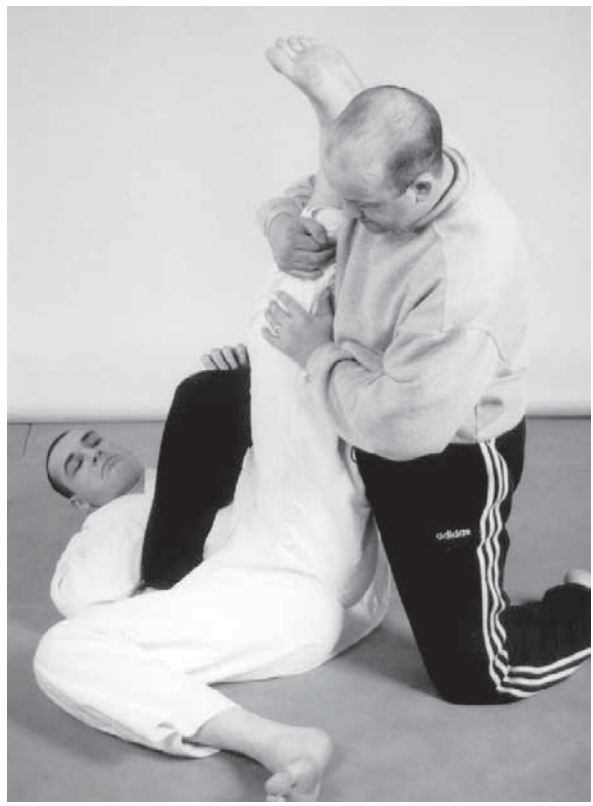


Sitting ankle bar

Or alternatively you can keep the same hold and sit down, wrenching at the ankle as you do so. On the floor wrap your right leg over the opponent's left and link it with your left leg. This will stop the opponent grabbing your leg and putting on the same hold. If he tries to sit up to escape the hold kick him in the chest or face with your right foot. Lean back and force the wrist of your left arm hard against the opponent's ankle.

Crutch stretch and knee bar

Sweep your right hand under the opponent's left leg and stand up, step over his belly with your right leg in an anti-clockwise direction so that your back is now facing the opponent, keep hold of the leg, as per illus. Grip the opponent's leg with both hands at his foot and calf and sit back across the left side of the opponent's body and bring the leg with you. Use your groin as a fulcrum and bend his leg, at the knee, over it. At the same time put your right foot into his groin, at the very top of his right leg, and push.



In honesty I do not really favour the leg bars, though I have seen some spectacular finishes with them, especially by the brilliant Ken Shamrock from the USA who seems to specialise in leg bar finishes.

Chapter Six

Finishing from Juji Gatame

In the sport of Judo where atemi is not allowed the art of finishing Juji Gatame has become quite a complex matter (that is, when you take the arm bar and the opponent interlinks his hands to block the bar).

In the world of real where atemi is the order of the day this is not such a complex matter, you simply give the opponent pain in another area so that he is forced, often subconsciously, to release his grip to defend that area. If I push my thumb in the opponent's eye he is going to have to release his grip on his own hand to stop me, in doing so he allows me the bar. Here are a few ideas to work on. If you want more detail on releases I highly recommend Neil Adams' book *Arm Locks*, published by Ippon Books.

There are different schools of thought on technique and how to develop it. I try to develop it as close to the way, and the place, that I intend to use it as possible. Everything I train is

either for my main artillery techniques in a real street defence situation or my support system for the same arena. If I train too much away from the realities of this I am, in a way, ill preparing myself for it. By disallowing strikes and bites in the controlled arena I am stripping the reality away from my artillery so that, when I do end up in a real encounter and an opponent gouges or bites me, I may be beaten because in not training for those possibilities (or probabilities more like) I have not learned to defend against them.

As I said before, you get what you train for. Muscle memory will print out what is on the memory banks and if you have to start thinking too much in a real encounter that thought, that indecision could cost you the fight. Because those in the sport side of fighting are not allowed to use the illegal techniques, as they are known, they have to devise techniques that are legal but that hold not real relevance in a real combat scenario. If my opponent grips his own hand to block a bar then I'll punch him in the head or poke him in the eye until he lets go - end of story.

The other side of the coin of course is that, in not allowing illegal techniques, one is forced to perfect the technique in hand and really fine tune it so that, perhaps, you can make the techniques work without it - this is a good thing and for this reason some of my training is devoted to restricted fighting to force and develop the use clean technique. But never forgetting that I am not training it for sport rather I am training it for the savage opponent on the street.

Wrist flex

This is a finishing technique on its own. Grab the opponent's hand, whichever one is uppermost and bend it forward at the wrist, when the pain hits, the opponent will release his grip and allow you to take the juji Gatame.

Finger bend

Grab the opponent's fingers, or thumb, on the nearest hand and bend back hard, when the pain hits, the opponent will release his grip and allow you to take the juji Gatame.

Finger strike

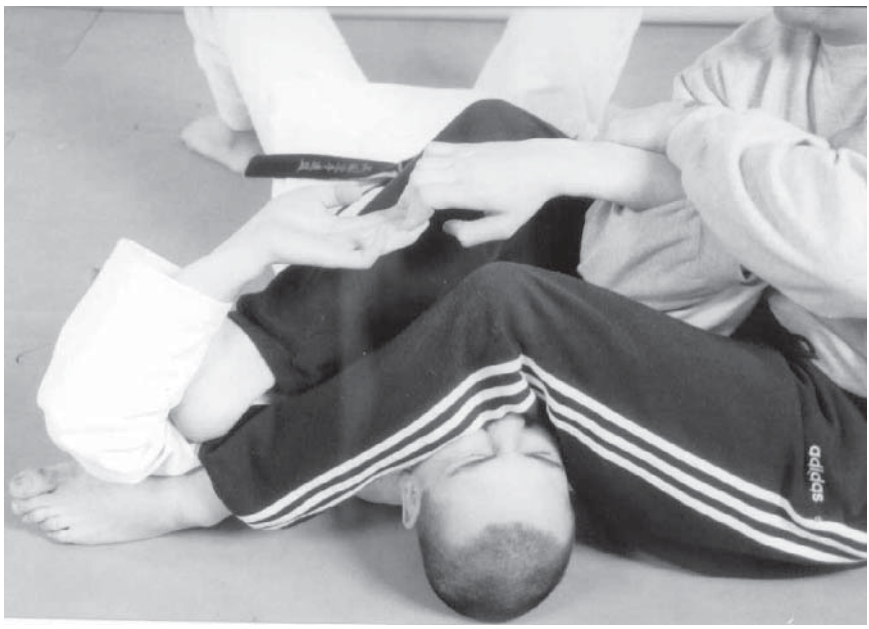
Wrap the opponent's fingers with your right middle knuckles, when the pain hits, the opponent will release his grip and allow you to take the juji Gatame.

Kick and release

Lift up your right leg and axe kick the opponent in the ribs and groin until he releases his grip, when the pain hits, the opponent will release his grip and allow you to take the juji Gatame.

Kick biceps

Place your foot onto the opponent's biceps, the arm furthest away from you, and kick or push with your leg to break his grip, when the opponent releases his grip take the juji Gatame.



Eye poke

Poke or press the opponent's eye with your left hand, when the pain hits, the opponent will release his grip and allow you to take the juji Gatame.

Head punch

Punch the opponent in the face, when the pain hits, the opponent will release his grip and allow you to take the juji Gatame.

Chapter Seven

Drilling

Drilling is the bread and butter training of everyone that I ever knew or read about who was any good. The more you drill the more the technique becomes yours, once you acquire the 'feel' the technique will be yours forever. It's not as if you have to drill these techniques for ever more (though there will always be new ones to drill) but you do have to at the beginning.

When I was first learning and perfecting my hand techniques I would think nothing of going for a 5 mile run and then doing anything up to 40 rounds on the punch bag to get my hands where I wanted them to be. Sometimes my hands and arms would hurt so much that I couldn't hit at all on my seminars. My friends said that I was mad and that 40 rounds in one session was, at best, unhealthy, and of course there were the sceptics that didn't believe I did 40 rounds anyway.

But there were things that I found in those marathon sessions that could not be discovered in any other way (how much your hands hurt for one thing), intangible things, a certain 'feel' for a technique, a new discovery. Things that have stayed with me to this day and will forever more, things that I cannot even pass on to my own students because I can't explain them properly. But when people look at my technique they see and feel something there that they do not see and feel in their own technique or the technique of other people.

When they ask me what that extra something is I cannot give them the answer, only that I found the intangible difference in one of my marathon sessions. When I went to Bob Spour to learn the ferocious art of Thai he couldn't believe how quickly I picked it up. I picked up the technique because I would take it away with me and treat it like a day at work (not that I encourage conventional work of course, far better to spend your days training, or talking about training, or reading about training, or watching videos about training), I would spend whole sessions on the right leg thigh kick, then whole sessions on the left leg. I spent hours and hours and hours just on single technique, and it is the most boring thing

to do, but in one month you can put in more flight time than another person will get in two years. Then people say to you 'you got your instructors certificate quick didn't you?' As though it was given to you free with the lid of a cornflakes packet, and I'd reply 'yea, while you were in the pub talking about it I was in the gym doing it'. Hence the expression 'the Thai leg kick? Yea, I spent five years on that one night!' So drilling is important, and the more the better, very few people have the discipline to isolate a technique and work it for hours on end, if you do then that will make you different and take you to the top of the class.

I will list an assortment of drills that I actually practice, but bear in mind that these are not cast in stone, change them, make up your own, do what ever you like as long as it allows you to repeat the moves over and over until they become a part of you and if the going gets a little tough and you feel like giving up remember, if it was easy everyone would be good.

From the mount

Juji Gatame(arm bar)

Sit through to your right and take the full Juji gatame, sit back into the mount and do the same to the left hand side - 25 reps each side.

Reverse arm bar

Take the arm bar from the mount position only this time get the opponent to roll onto his belly, as though trying to escape. When he does employ the reverse arm bar return to the mount and do the same to the opposite side - 25 reps each side.

Standing arm bar to Juji Gatame

From reverse arm bar position have the opponent stand up as though trying to escape, as he stands employ the standing arm bar. When the opponent taps force him over onto his back and make a seated Juji Gatame, then back to the start position. Repeat 25 times to the left and then change and do 25 reps to the right.

From Scarf Hold

Five bar and lock drill

As in the chapter on bars from the scarf hold position go through the five bars and tie offs in quick succession. Push his right arm, at the elbow and palm up, across your right thigh. Switch legs to create a higher fulcrum by bringing your left leg through and pushing your right leg back and bar the arm over your left leg - quickly switch back your legs and drive his arm, at the elbow joint, into/over the lower fulcrum of your right leg. Tie his arm off under your reverse/left leg- then to finish tie the arm off under your right leg. Do this sequence 25 times and then do the same on the other side of the opponent from a left scarf hold.

Juji Gatame

Sit through and make the bar, then straight back to the scarf hold position - repeat 25 times and then change to the left scarf hold and repeat the sequence.

From Upper 4 1/4

Juji Gatame

Take the bar from the upper 4 1/4 and then go straight back to the start position and repeat 25 times - both sides.

These are just a few to keep you going, I could fill the whole book with drills but there would be no sense in that so, make your own up and practise until you're sick to death of the technique - then you'll be good at it.

Conclusion

I hope that this book has given you a taste for the bars and locks. Remember, stick with them, they are not nearly as immediate as the chokes and strangles, but once perfected they certainly are as effective and they definitely do work when the shit hits the fan and reality is on the menu. My friend Neil Adams won the world Judo championships, one of the toughest fighting arenas on the planet, against a Japanese opponent, with Juji Gatame so, if you can work it against one of the top Judoka in the world, someone who has developed the manipulative strength and knowledge to block the technique, then you will make it work against just about anyone.

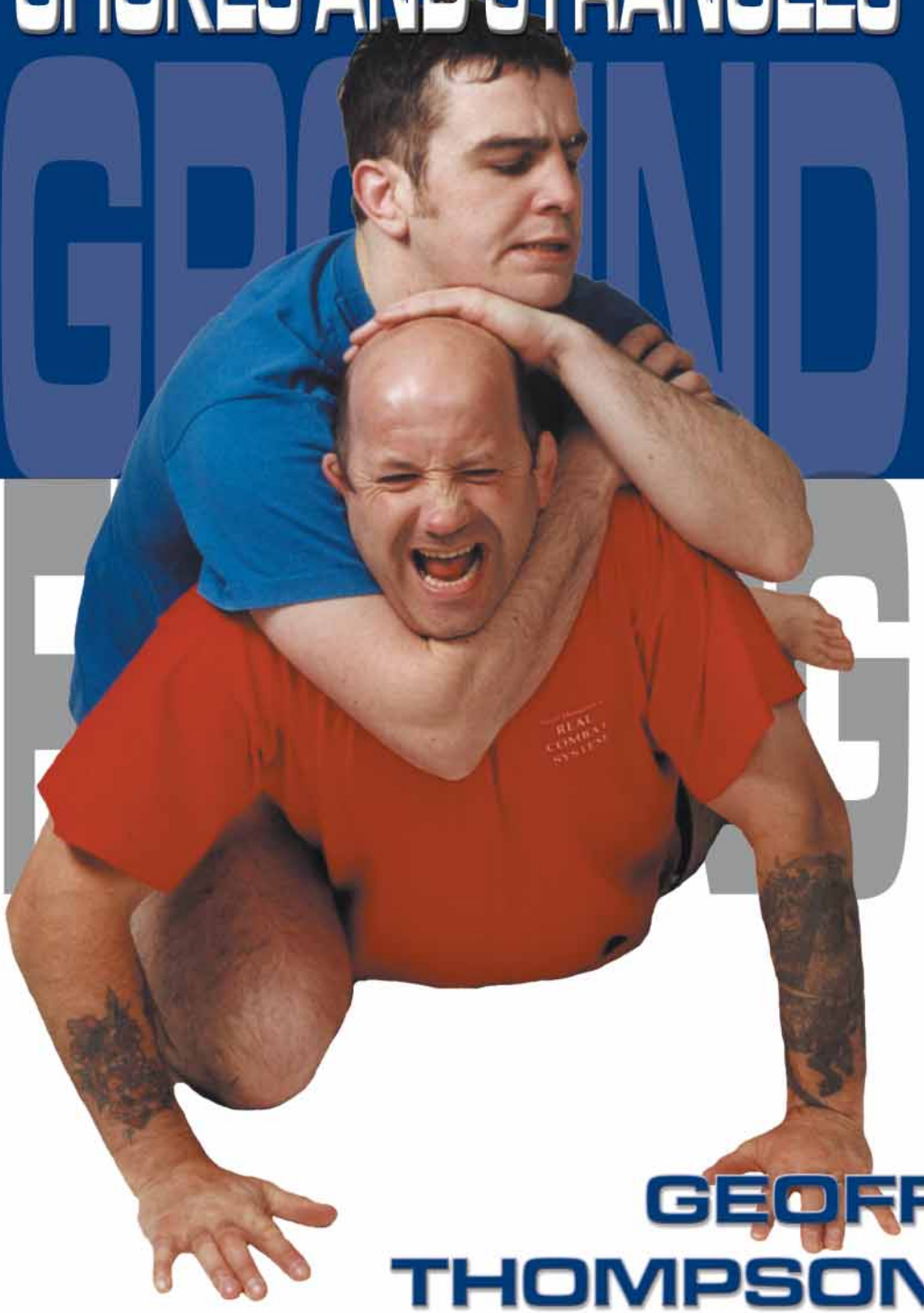
Many people give up on the Kansetsu-Waza because they seem over technical and take a lot of learning. After failing once or twice they throw them away, please don't be one of those people, stick with it, persevere, study and you'll enjoy one of the most devastating finishing techniques in any arena that there is to have. There will be more on arm bars and

chokes in the last two volumes of this series: *Fighting From Your Back* and *Fighting From Your Knees*.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this text, I hope it has helped, and I hope that you enjoy the rest of the series.

GEOFF THOMPSON'S GROUND FIGHTING SERIES

CHOKES AND STRANGLES



GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

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Important note

With ground fighting techniques the author recommends that you practice only under supervision to avoid accidents and always employ the 'tap system' in practice (if you want to submit or a technique is too painful or you wish to stop practice at any time tap the mat, tap yourself or your opponent with your hand or foot; if this is not possible just say to your opponent 'tap'). If an opponent taps out it is imperative that you release your hold immediately or suffer the consequence of what might be serious injury, and remember, what goes around comes around. If you do not release when he taps he may not release the next time you tap.

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

About the author

Geoff Thompson has written over 20 published books and is known world wide for his autobiography *Watch My back*, about his nine years working as a night club doorman. He holds the rank of 6th Dan black belt in Japanese karate, 1st Dan in Judo and is also qualified to senior instructor level in various other forms of wrestling and martial arts. He has several scripts for stage, screen and TV in development with Destiny Films.

He has published several articles for GQ magazine, and has also been featured in *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Arena*, *Front* and *Loaded* magazines, and has been featured many times on mainstream TV.

Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine.

For full details of other books and videos by
Geoff Thompson, visit www.geoffthompson.com

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Introduction

Medically speaking

Welcome to the third volume in this Ground Fighting series, *Chokes and Strangles*. This is the most devastating, misunderstood and dangerous of all the volumes and the practice of what the Japanese Judoka call Shimewaza should be treated, at all times, with the utmost respect, also I do not recommend its practice to minors.

Fatality is the possible consequence of misuse or misunderstanding. A good choke/strangle can take a man to unconsciousness in under three seconds, if held on after unconsciousness it can cause brain damage - even brain death in around 15 seconds.

In a real situation, with time distortion brought on as a part of the adrenal syndrome, 15 seconds may appear to go in the blink of an eye and before you know it you have killed the opponent (which is OK if that's what you intended) and would/could be facing a murder charge. Understanding this

at the offset is imperative so that practise and actual use can be tempered with, and to, some degree of control so that unfortunate accidents can be avoided.

In the controlled arena we use the tap system to avoid unconsciousness, the recipient tapping himself, his opponent, the floor etc. with his hand or his foot to signify submission, at which point the move should always be released. Outside, of course, there is no such practise and the opponent's response to a choke or strangle will be unconsciousness, whereafter every second is and can prove fatal.

I remember one situation when I worked in the Diplomat pub in Coventry, a great little place right in the heart of Coventry city centre. I was actually with Sharon on this particular night and we were talking away when I noticed a couple of men arguing. Trying to be pro-active and stop the situation before it started I moved over to them and politely asked them to discontinue the argument otherwise I would have to ask them to leave. Now I don't quite know whether they just didn't hear me because they were so deeply engrossed in the argument (adrenal deafness is not an

uncommon side effect of the fight or flight syndrome) or whether they didn't take my warning seriously, but either way they totally ignored me. Just as I was about to ask them again they kicked off and started fighting, they moved about five feet, locked in a ferocious vertical grappling embrace, and ended up on the main dance floor just by where Sharon and her friend were standing.

I tore after them like a fast thing, grabbed one of the men in a rear choke and pulled him from the other. By this time my partner 'Kenny the body builder' had come to my assistance and grabbed the other guy. The one that I held in the reverse choke was going crazy trying to get me off him. I turned him from a rear choke to a side choke/head lock and increased the pressure to control his thrashing. I whispered into his ear that if he didn't calm down I was going to have to knock him out. The hold was now secure so I was in the right position to do so if need be.

Again he refused to listen and went crazy trying to throw me off: he was a strong guy. I tightened the lock once more and his struggling ceased, when I gently released the grip to see if

he had 'gone' he fell to the floor in an unconscious heap, he didn't come around for a couple of minutes and when he did I helped him up and showed him to the door. He asked me who had 'sparked' him, I told him that I had and he said 'Oh!' and left without further ado.

I personally have had very many KO's in the street with these techniques and I am in no doubt of their potency. It's a good feeling when you have secured the hold (whichever one you are employing) and you know that the fight is over because, once on, the chance of escape is almost non existent. In my early days I knocked several people out with chokes and strangles by mistake because I did not appreciate their potency, where I held people with what I would consider restraining force I knocked then out because the force was too much. Through experience I learned to use enough control to restrain an opponent when ejecting him from the club, without knocking him out, though I was always then in a position to take the hold to unconsciousness if the need arrived.

Chokes and Strangles

They say that a little knowledge can be dangerous, many people have been killed in street encounters through the misuse, most often an inadvertent misuse, of the choke and strangle because the hold has been secured and then not released. This is not usually gratuitous misuse it is usually through fear, fear that if the opponent gets out of the hold he may batter you senseless so you hold on for dear life, it is what I call the 'panic grip'.

The way someone grips you in the dojo or gym will be very different from the way that they grab you in a real encounter, even breaking the opponent's gripping limb may not release the panic grip and often nothing less than unconsciousness will do it. It is an incredible thing to witness, and I have been witness to it many times. When one of my friends got stabbed outside a city night club he grabbed and gripped his attacker so tightly that when he fell to the floor, as a result of the knife wound, he pulled him with him and it was not until my friend lost consciousness, even though four of his attackers friends laid into him on the floor, that the grip was released. Sadly my friend died in this unprovoked, unsolicited attack.

It is my intention to give the reader enough knowledge to be able to use these techniques, only in times of self defence, with the control that they demand. Often in practice, as you will see if you do any degree of live ground fighting, one's arms, even legs get tied into a position that disables you, or the opponent from being able to tap out so it is for this reason that I recommend training under supervision - this is very important.

Basically the difference between a choke and a strangle is that the choke cuts off the airways via the wind pipe at the front of the neck and the strangle cuts off the blood to the brain via the carotid arteries at either side of the neck - both former and latter stopping the flow of oxygen to the brain and thus causing unconsciousness. Depending upon how long and how tight the technique is held this can vary from very mild unconsciousness to deep unconsciousness and even death.

The most efficient strangle depresses the superior carotid artery, preventing oxygenated blood reaching the cerebral cortex. The compression usually has to be very strong

because the carotid artery is protected by the muscular band of the thick sternocleidomastoid muscle, on the side of the neck. Often when you employ the choke/strangle it may be neither one nor the other, rather you have gripped the opponent partly across the throat and partly across the neck, so it is a part choke and a part strangle slightly cutting off the blood and partly cutting off the air - it doesn't really matter as long as it still does the job, which it will.

I have never known an accident with choking or strangling technique in the controlled arena that has ended in death or serious injury, though there have been, and I have known very many in civvy street. Personally I have found the choke to be far more dangerous and prone to accidents than the strangle, with a strong naked choke using the bar of the wrist as the depressing implement it would be, and is, very easy, even by accident, to collapse the opponent's wind pipe and/or severely damage the larynx or the trachea - so, again, care should be taken at all times in the controlled arena and the knowledge should be taken to use as a tempering yard stick into the pavement arena.

People often ask me 'how do you know when to let go of the opponent in a real fight so that you don't kill him?' In theory, if you have taken the choke/strangle from a vertical position the opponent will let you know that the move is 'on' by falling over (unconscious), though in practice this is not always the case. In my early days on the door when I did not really understand the mechanics of the techniques I knocked many people out without intending to and then, afterwards, wondered what I had done. On many occasions I held a thrashing, violent attacker so tightly that I never felt the drop of body weight when he went unconscious because I, in an overzealous bid to control him, actually held the KO'd opponent off the floor, and when I slightly released the hold to see if he had 'gone' (as I always do) he plunged to the floor in an unconscious heap.

When you are on the ground it's even worse because when the opponent does finally 'go' there will be no plummet of body weight. Later I learned to look for the signs of imminent unconsciousness so that I could take a person, if I wanted to, very close to unconsciousness without actually completely knocking him out or, if I felt it needed it, into a mild

unconscious state, or if I thought it was called for (sometimes it really was) right out of the game.

Basically most untrained people go through the same ritual when you apply the choke, though the more sensible people just capitulate, innately knowing that they have no chance of escape. Firstly they go crazy and buck and bronk like an unbroken stallion and try to rip your arms from around their throat, for these few seconds the enemy will be very strong, this is his in-fight adrenalin going to work (more about that in my Fear book).

When their energy dissipates and they realise that they cannot escape they go through a kind of pleading ritual (they can't usually speak because you are crushing their throat) where they almost pat your arms in an innate version of the tap system, their breathing at this point will be a sickly gurgling sound - former and latter are the pre-cursors to unconsciousness.

A couple of seconds after this they will not move at all, and if they are standing you may feel a drop in the opponent's body

weight as his legs abandon him. When he stops trying to escape and his hands are no longer touching your choking arm, he is 'out of there' and this would be a good time to release the hold. If you're unsure maybe hold it for a couple of seconds more but no more: death will be knocking at the door.

In your adrenal haze it is very easy to miss all of these signs, even though they will be staring you in the face, but the more you learn to temper and fine tune the hold in the controlled arena and spot the same signs in your training partners just before they 'tap out' the better you will be able to judge the right time to release in the real situation.

I have also found the choke/strangle ideal for controlling someone that perhaps did not need knocking out or beating up, but did need calming down. Once I had them firmly in the hold, sometimes standing other times on the floor, I would talk to them and calm them down. It always worked because, to the people that have never experienced being choked it is a very frightening feeling. This panic usually always brought on capitulation without actually hurting the opponent, and if

the little chat did not work then I was in a very good position to 'put their lights out'.

If I was dealing with a very nasty person I would even whisper in his ear, just before I knocked him out, 'good night!' Psychologically this frightens the pants off the opponent because it intimates to him that you are in control (which of course you are) and that not only are you capable of knocking him out but you can actually tell him when you are going to do it. When he comes around, and probably for the rest of his life, he will remember you and that particular incident.

So, to reiterate, give the chokes and strangles the utmost respect in practice and in reality, learn to know them well so that abuse does not become a by-product of ignorance.

As I have said with the other volumes in this series many of the positions that you find yourself in may leave you in a good position to get back to your feet whilst your opponent is still in the horizontal position. If this is an option I feel that as a rule of thumb it should usually always be taken, in a self defence situation it should be your prerogative.

If the situation is a match fight then there may be contributing factors that needed to be brought into the computation. Just because you're vertical and the opponent is horizontal does not guarantee that the victory is automatically yours. If he is a strong fighter, someone prepared to take a few kicks to get back to his feet, he may do just that, get back up and kick your arse. You may have spent five minutes trying to get the opponent to the floor because he is out punching or kicking you, he may be far superior to you in vertical fighting - if that's the case then the last place you want to be is back on your feet.

Often a brilliant vertical fighter, boxers and kickers especially, are like upturned turtles on the floor. If that's the case then keep them there until you have finished the fight. If you are fighting numbers then the floor is absolutely the worse place on earth to be - get back up as soon as possible. If you can't get back up, he's not just going to let you, then you have to make the best of a bad job no matter how unfavourable the odds may be.

Note (1)

Throughout the text, and from here on in, I will refer to the chokes and strangles in the abbreviated form of 'C & S'.

Note(2)

There are several C & S that can be employed from your back, and from kneeling position. In order to keep the books in the series categorical I have not entered them in this text, they will be covered in detail in *Fighting From Your Back* and *Fighting From Your Knees*.

Review

For those who have read the first two volumes of this series, *Pins: The Bedrock* and *The Escapes* I apologise for repeating material already covered. I would like, before I start talking about chokes and strangles from the various positions, to review quickly the basic pins, because if you don't know them a lot of the speak throughout the text may seem like gobble-de-gook.

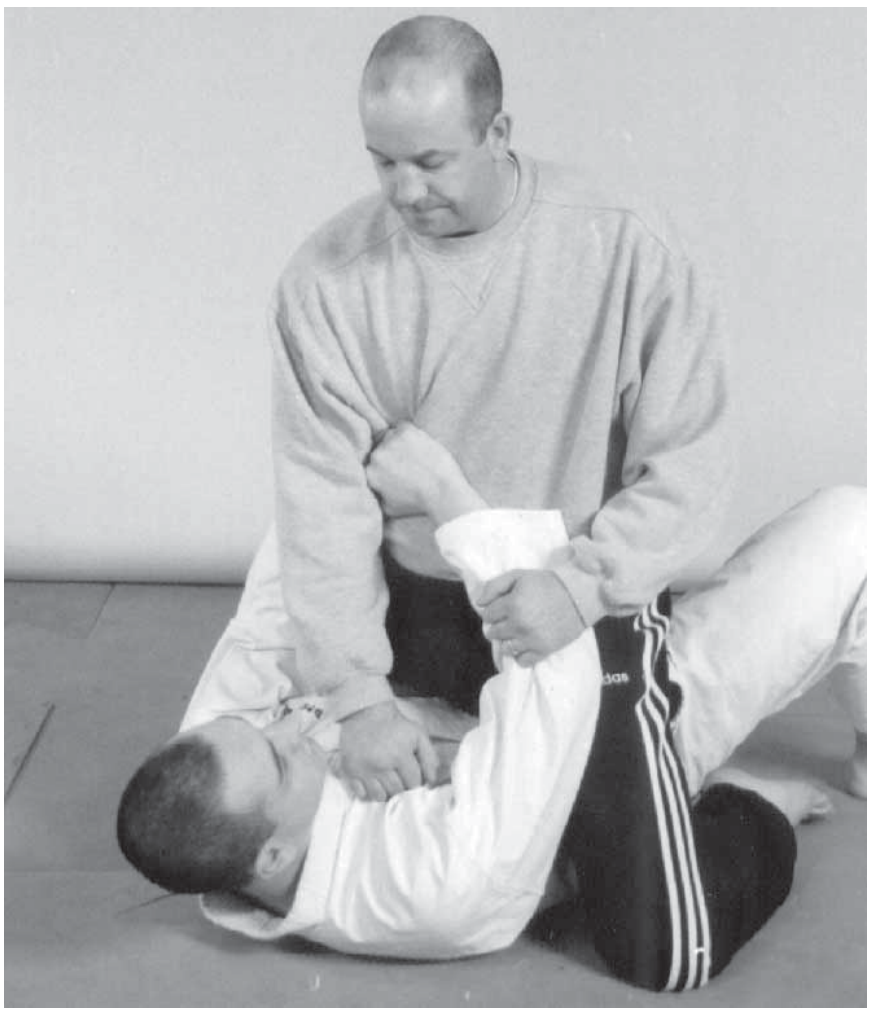
I have no intention of actually going into the histrionics of the holds, how to defend them and how to attack from them, etc. That, as I said, is a volume on its own. I will repeat, though, that the pins are the bedrock of ground fighting and to go on to finishing techniques of a complex nature before learning the imperative basics is a quick way to failing at everything that you attempt.

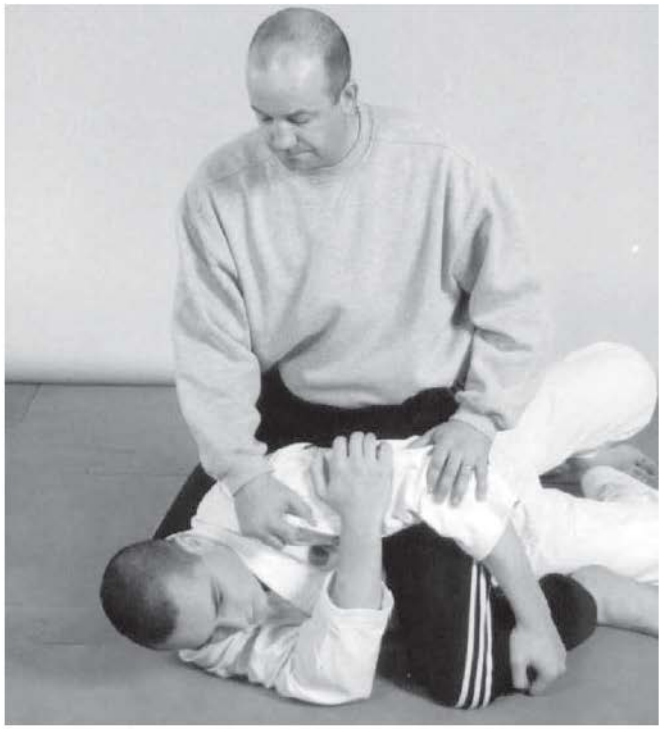
Master the standing and walking before you try the running and sprinting, the control of the opponent on the floor, via the pinning techniques, is so very, very, VERY important that to miss it is like diving in the water before you have learned to swim.

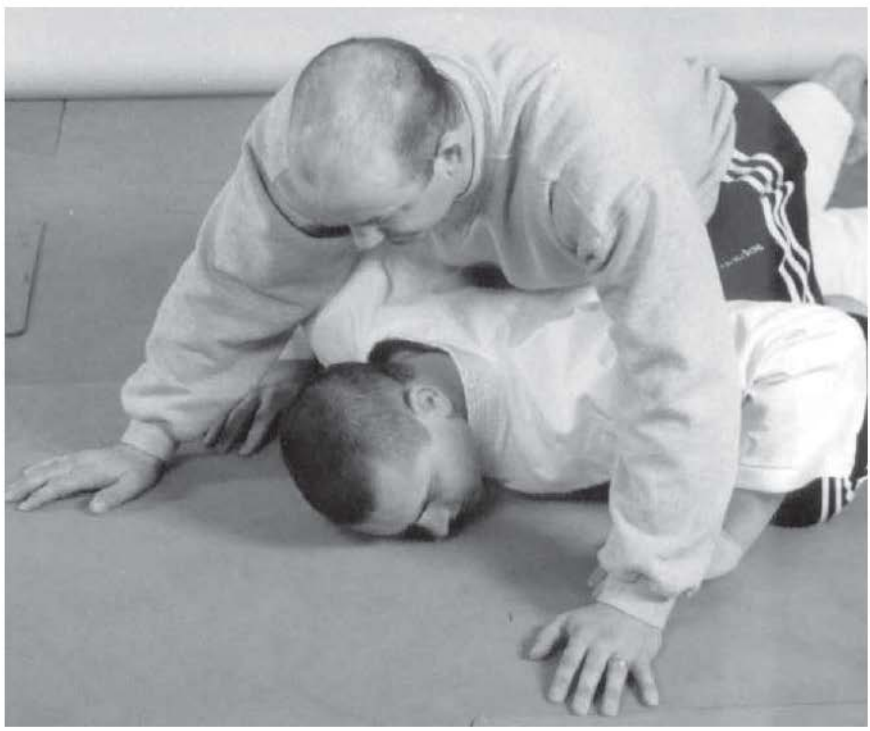
Chokes and Strangles

All I will list in this chapter is the holds themselves with one accompanying illustration so that, if you haven't read the other books and have no knowledge of the 'ground' you'll at least understand the 'speak'.

The Mount Position:
Side mount; Reverse mount

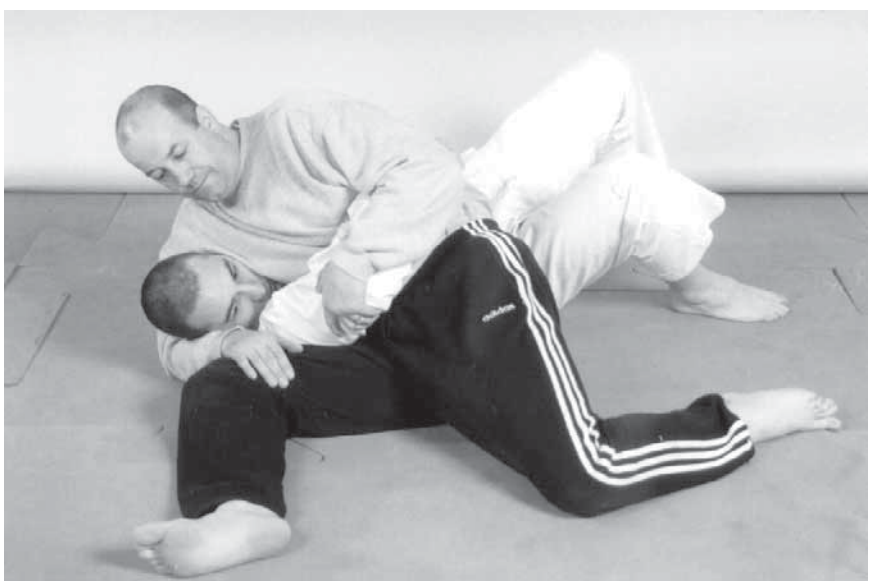






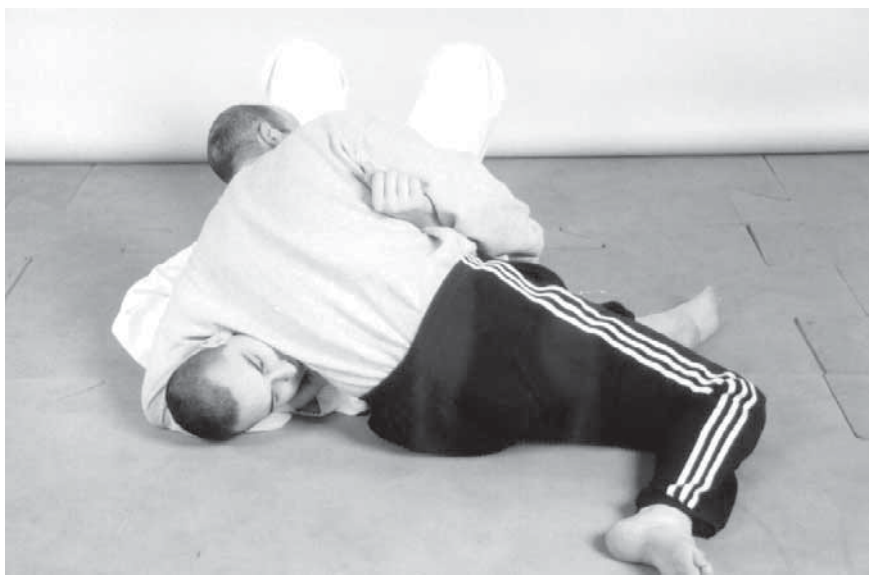
The Side Four Quarter

The Scarf Hold



The Jack-Knife

Reverse Scarf Hold



Upper 4 /14 Pin

Chapter One

Chokes and strangles from the mount position

Throughout this text we will be talking about C & S not only using the wrapping motion of the arms (wrapping the arm or arms around the neck/throat to secure the hold) but, where applicable, also using the fingers to procure the same effect, though to be honest the wrapping motion is always a lot more effective. Having said that, I have finished quite a few situations using the grip of my fingers around the opponent's larynx (to be detailed later).

The mount position is a very favourable finishing position, as detailed in *Pins: The Bedrock* and *The Escapes* in this Ground Fighting series. Many experienced ground fighters finish the majority of their fights from here. It is particularly good for finishing with C & S because, once on his back, the inexperienced fighter will usually want to turn onto his belly to protect his face from your blows and in an innate attempt to escape.

Chokes and Strangles

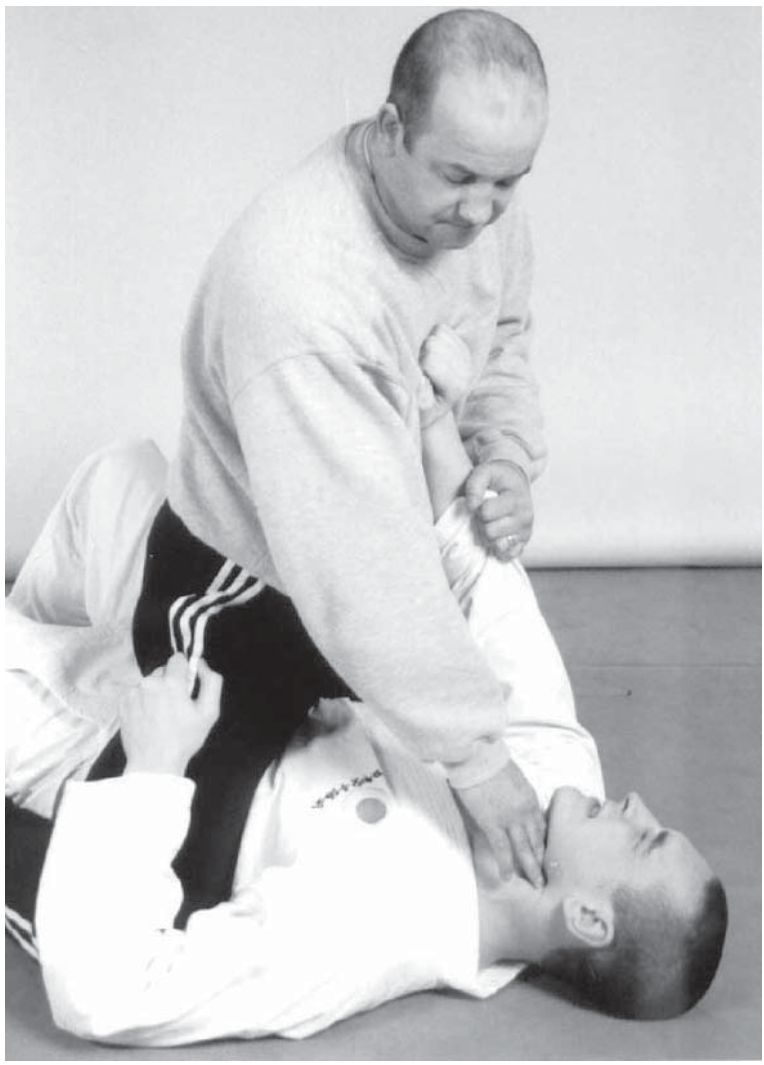
When someone is punching you in the face it is very natural to see turning to your belly as a good means of defence, in reality, to the experienced ground fighter an opponent that turns onto his stomach is a finished opponent. Most will use blows to the opponent's face purely and simply to get him to do just that, turn over, so that they can employ the ultimate coup de grace, the C & S.

If you are fighting an experienced grappler he, of course, will know this and go to almost any length not to be turned over. This is where turning techniques are very handy. Smothers and C & S from the mount, without the turn, also come in handy.

Fingers to the throat

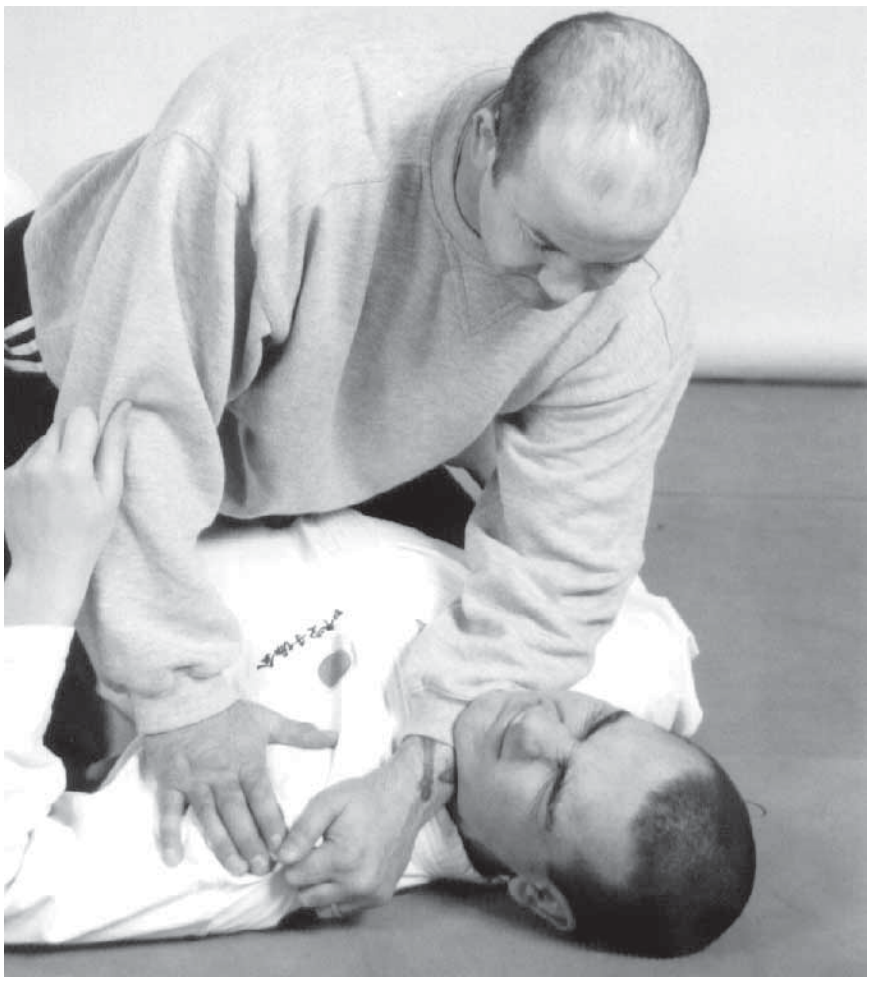
Poke the points of your fingers into the opponent's throat, preferably between the neck muscle and the wind pipe, and lean all your weight onto them. I use this more to turn an opponent than to finish - but have finished with it also. It is an incredibly sensitive area that will have an effect.

If using it as a means of turning the opponent then attack the left side of the throat to turn to the left and the right side of the throat to turn to the right. As a rule of thumb the opponent will move away from pain points so you literally push/pull/rip/strike etc in the direction that you want him to go.



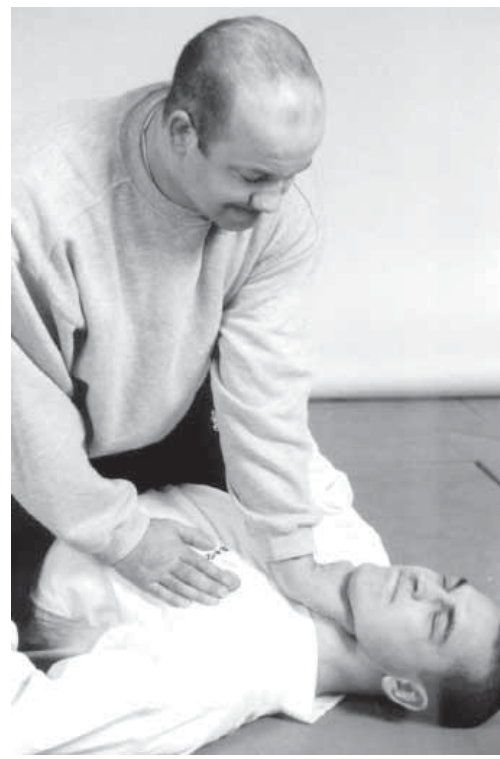
Forearm crush

Lie your forearm, either one, onto the opponent's throat/neck and lean all your weight onto it, even going onto one knee if you wish, this will close the wind pipe and block the opponent's air way, in his bid to escape the extreme pain of this technique the opponent will often turn over leaving himself very vulnerable to a reverse mount choke.



Larynx grab

Though very crude this is one of my favourite and indeed best finishers, it is so basic and obvious that many people do not notice it or they ignore it. Grip your fingers around the opponent's larynx and windpipe and squeeze as tightly as you can, try to make your fingers meet, again if this does not stop the opponent it will surely encourage him to turn to escape. I often use my free hand to attack the opponent with this hold, and with every other hold where I have one hand free - there are no rules, do what is needed to finish or secure a finish.



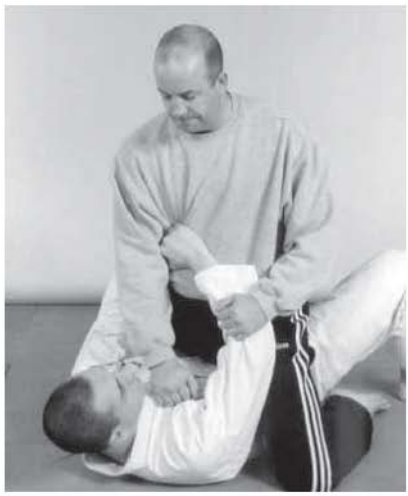
Mount choke

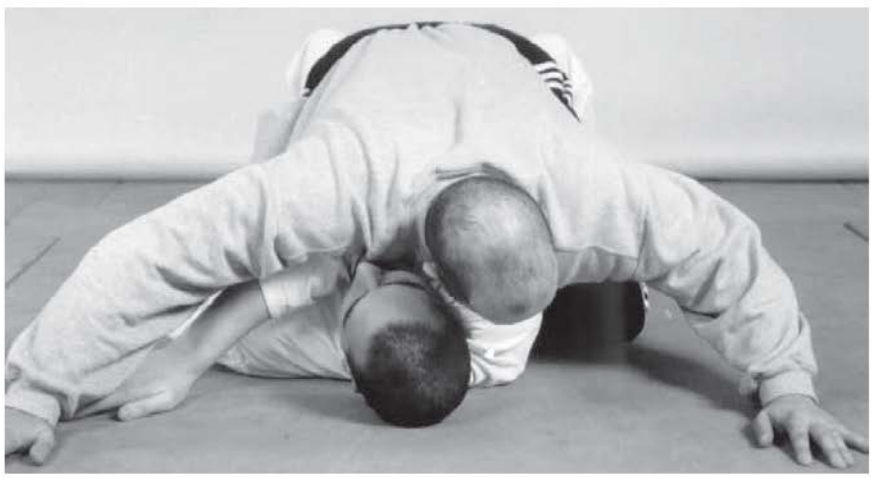
This is a naked strangle but from the front as opposed to the conventional reverse position. It can be executed with the right or left arm. Wrap your right arm under the opponent's head and join the other side with your left hand. If you squeeze tightly from here you will attack the opponent's neck bone at the rear and form a crank which is painful but not always a finishing hold. To secure the strangle, force the opponent's face to the left or the right by poking him in the eye/cheek bone/nose - anywhere sensitive, so that he turns his head and thus exposes his neck to the bar of your right wrist.

Make sure that the bone of your right wrist is running along the opponent's neck, from here squeeze your arms tightly to secure the strangle. If you need more leverage go on to the balls of your feet and focus your body weight forward onto the opponent or, if you need or want more leverage still, jump into a jack-knife (on your left) position and move in a clockwise direction to tighten and add intensity to the grip. This will also act as a kind of tourniquet to tighten your hold and suppress the carotid artery.

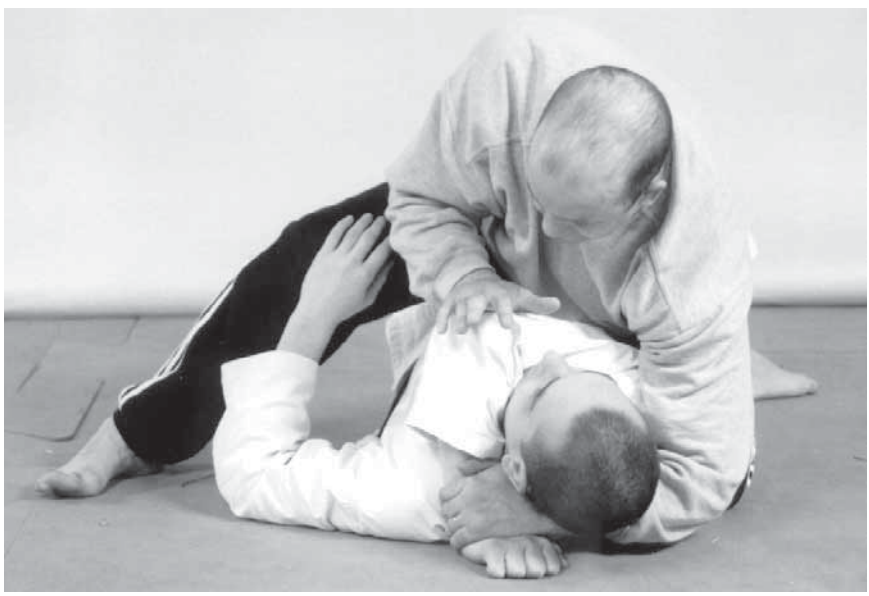
Trap arm choke

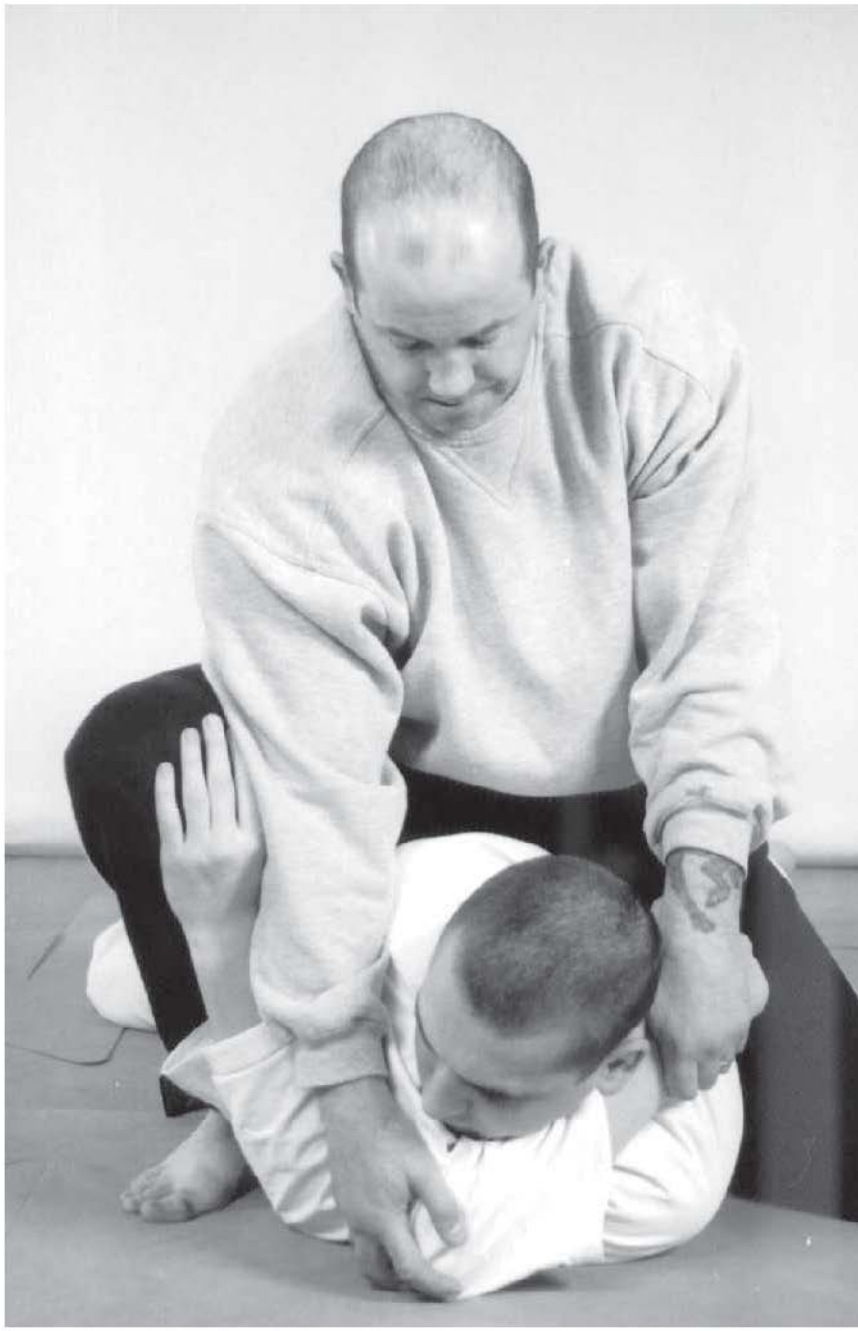
Instinctively the opponent will put one or both hands towards your throat/face/chest in a bid to attack you or defend himself. Knock his right arm with your left hand by striking it at the elbow, across to your own right and immediately lie on top of it, this will disable his arm from use. To form a strangle, feed your right arm under the opponent's head and join at the other side of his head with your left hand, make sure the bony part of your wrist is running along the opponent's neck. This will form the better part of the move. Lean your weight forward and squeeze with your arms to make the strangle.
It helps if you can force the opponent's face across, via any pain point, so that the neck is better exposed. If you need to add weight to the move jump up onto the balls of your feet to focus your body weight into the action. If you need more still, jump from the mount into the jack-knife and crank the opponent's neck in a clockwise direction, which will act as a kind of tourniquet and tighten your hold.





Separate to this technique, once the arm is trapped initially, you can feed your left arm under the opponent's head, from left to right, and grab the opponent's trapped hand at the wrist and pull his own hand under his head. In effect choking him with his own arm. To make it tighter pull tightly with your left hand, sit up and push his elbow with your right hand, which acts as a strong choke. If this is not finishing the hold then, as you push and pull his trapped arm, sit slightly off the opponent so that you can force him to turn onto his belly leaving you in the mount position from the rear.



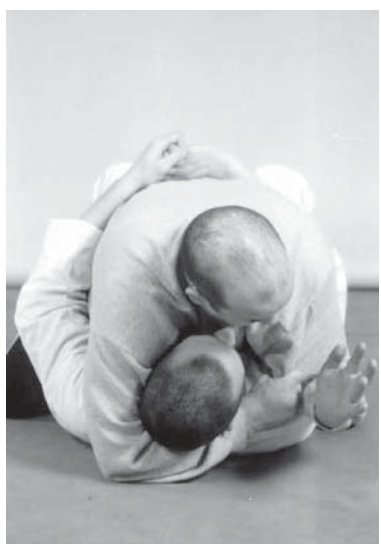


Smother hold

When the opponent's face is upwards lean onto it with your chest and cover his mouth and nose, this will block his airways and stop him from breathing. To better secure the technique hold the opponent's face and head at both sides with your hands, use eye gouges and face pokes, even punches, to keep the head in position. If the opponent's face is not positioned properly for the smother use your fingers, again in the eyes or face, to push it to the position that you want. For better leverage jump onto your toes and focus your weight behind the technique or jump to a jack-knife position and do the same.

The figure eight choke

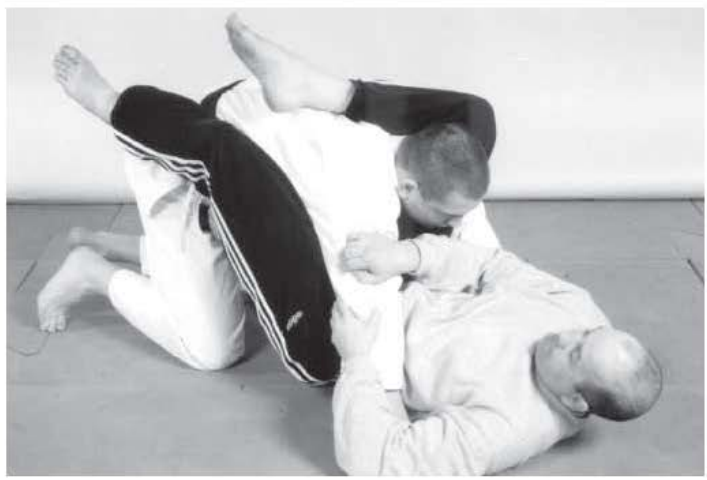
This is quite a complicated choke, but very effective once it is 'on'. It is not one of the holds that I chase but if the opportunity arises then I'll take it with both hands (if you'll forgive the pun). Feed your right arm under the opponent's head, from your right to left, at the other side grip your own left biceps, or grab your shirt if you can't reach through enough, and feed the left arm over the opponent's throat, making sure that the bone of the wrist is laying over his wind pipe and grab your own right biceps/shoulder (or grip the sleeve). Squeeze tightly to finish the hold. If you need more leverage go onto the balls of your feet and focus your weight onto the hold, if you need to you can also jump to a jack-knife position.



Triangular leg choke

Again this is not really a move that you chase, because you'd probably never get it, rather it is a move that you take when it is offered. It usually occurs when the opponent bridges you directly behind him in a bid to escape and places his right arm between your legs to try and force you off him, instinctively he tries to sit up to escape. As he forces you over your right leg will be over his left shoulder, his right arm between your legs. Throw your left leg over your right foot so that the back of your left knee is over the right foot. Scissor your right leg down to tighten the hold and squeeze together with your thighs to complete the choke.

To make the choke stronger and tighter pull the opponent's right arm through the gap as far as you can and pull his head downward to expose the neck. Your right thigh will cut off the blood at the left side of his body and his own shoulder will cut off the blood from the right side. Leg chokes take a lot of practice but, once you have the right 'feel', they are amongst the strongest of all ground fighting techniques.



Turn and choke

From the mount position this is the bread and butter technique, the most devastating and sought after of all. This is the favourite coup-de-grace of the legendary Grace family from Brazil, now residents of, and taking by storm, the USA. If you haven't seen their material I highly recommend that you seek it out, they are on the cutting edge of the ground fighting (and all-out fighting) scene.

Basically the mount position has been secured and defended (see Volume One for the details of securing, defending and attacking [from] this and all the other base pins), now you are going for the finish by attacking the face of the opponent until he either turns or is punched out, nine times out of ten he will instinctively turn to escape. When the opponent does, turn your end up in the reverse mount position, sitting on his back. From here feed your right arm, or left, around his throat, from right to left, and secure at the other side by gripping your left hand and squeezing to finish. To make the hold more secure, after feeding the right arm through, grip your left biceps/shoulder with your right hand and wrap the

left arm, with the palm of the hand on the back of the opponent's head.

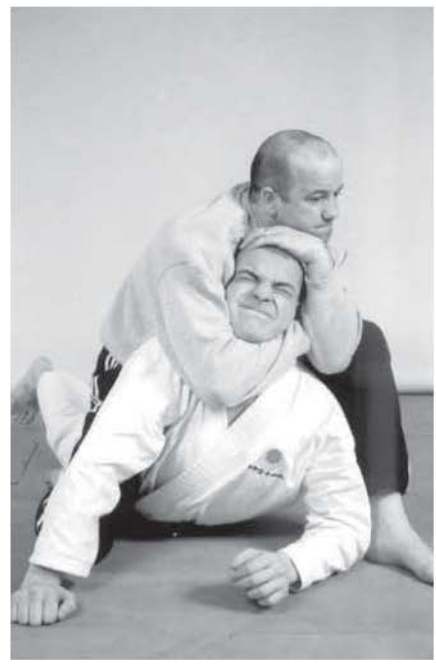
This position allows you to bring the powerful back and chest muscles into the hold, when you squeeze do so not only with the arms but also with a hug of your back and chest. If the opponent rolls over go with him and wrap your legs around his body in a scissor guard, which adds to the control.

If you push the opponent's head forward with the left hand this will help close the airway and also crank his neck. It is usual for the opponent to try and push up onto his hands from this position, this being the first step in his bid to get back to his feet. To be honest this just makes the choke easier to apply because in using his hands to push up (in a kind of press up action) he leaves his neck and throat unprotected.

It is important at this point, however, to be able to do the choke equally from both sides, he may get up in such a way that one side of his neck is not open for attack and so you have to go in from the other side. If, once the hold is secured, the opponent forces you over onto your back, he will

probably, in a futile bid to escape the hold, just go with him and scissor guard him as you fall. It won't make any difference at this point whether he stands up, rolls over, flips forward or flips back, wherever he lands he will still be in the choke and will still get knocked out. The more he thrashes about the quicker he will 'go' because he will be using up all of his oxygen and, because your C & S is cutting off any further supply, he'll have no reserve tanks to call on.

If the opponent is a little shy (or switched on) and uses his hands to protect his neck then reach over and grab your fingers into his eyes to force his head back, then secure the choke. As I said before the opponent will usually move away from pain, so give his some pain and he'll go just where you want him.

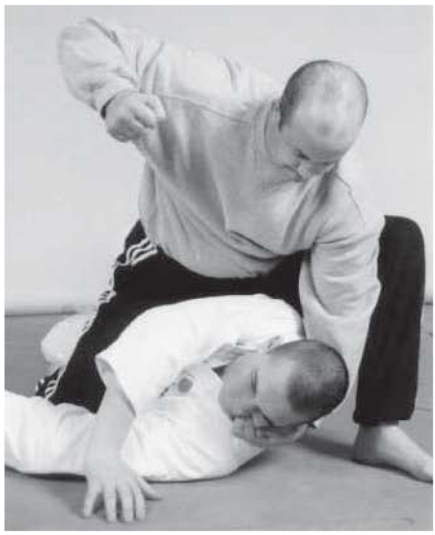


Lip turn to choke

One of the cruelest ways to turn an opponent, this is my favourite, is to feed your left arm under the opponent's head, from left to right, and hook your finger/s into the side of his mouth, being very careful not to go in too far and get bitten. Once you have your fingers in the lip, pull the left hand back through the same way as you fed it in (being sure to bring the lips with you). He will, 100%, every time, turn to his belly once the grip is secured.

If you don't want to turn the opponent straight away this is a good way of holding him so that you can, if you wish, punch him out from the mount position, or even turn him to the side mount to do the same. Again, if the circumstances warrant it (if the opponent has called you fatty or baldy or something bad like that) you can literally rip the opponent's mouth clean away from here. It is such a powerful grip that it does not bear thinking about.

Again, once the opponent is on his belly secure the choke in the usual way.



Eye turn and choke

The same as the last technique, only this time you place your finger into the eye socket to pull the opponent into the position that you want him, if it is to turn then, once over, secure your choke in the usual manner.

Nose turn choke

Feed your left arm through, as per last 2 techniques, and hook across the bridge of the nose, or if possible up the nostrils. Pull the opponent to the desired position with the pain compliance. Once over secure the choke.

Roll and choke

This is when the opponent rolls to escape, the defence to this is detailed in *Pins: The Bedrock* and *The Escapes* in this series and should be referred to for more detail. Basically, if you do not want him to turn just tighten your thighs and he will not be able to. If, however, you are willing to let him turn, at the end of the day he is far more vulnerable on his belly than on his back so allow him a gap and, as he rolls to the right, let your right arm hook around his neck and immediately couple it with your left in the usual manner. Scissor guard him with your legs to add security to inevitability.

Strangle from the side mount

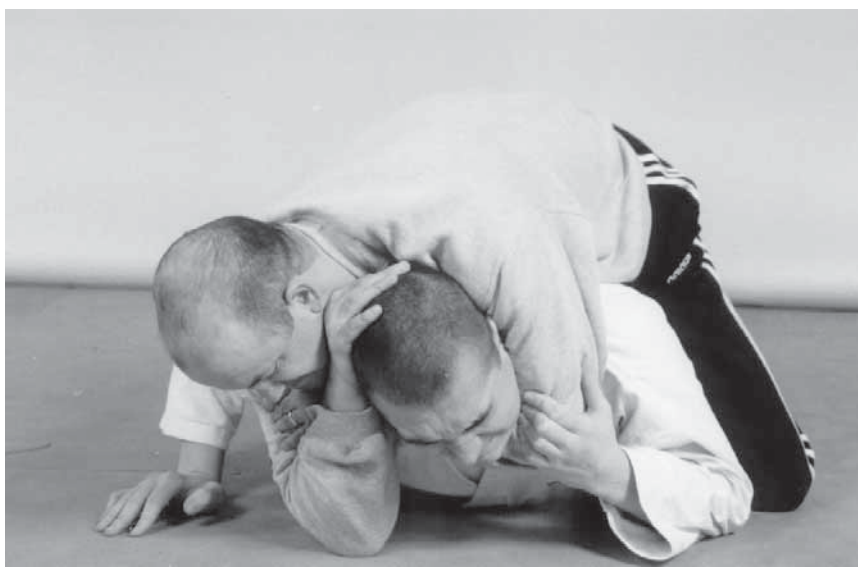
Many times you will find yourself in the side mount, especially if an opponent is reluctant to roll over onto his belly. This leaves the opponent's neck vulnerable to a strangle. Feed your right arm around his neck, from right to left, and couple with your left at the other side, either by gripping hands or by gripping your left biceps and wrapping the left arm behind his head.

From here squeeze to finish, and if this doesn't offer the leverage that you need then jump to the jack-knife position and focus your weight into the hold by going onto the balls of your feet.

Again, from the side mount the usual tricks work. If you wish completely to turn the opponent for a rear mount choke, grab the lip/nose/eye by feeding the left arm underneath the opponent's head, from left to right, or simply push, poke, butt etc. the opponent to encourage him that turning to his belly would be a good thing.

C & S from the rear mount

Often you will find yourself on the rear mount without having to really try, once here the usual chokes and strangles apply. The same as if you had forced the opponent to turn and if he defends his neck, use your fingers in his eyes or nostrils to bring his head into position to choke. From the rear mount you can also reach through and get a tight grip on the opponent's chin and, by pulling it back as far as you can, crank his neck and back from there but be very careful, it is very easy to damage severely an opponent's back and neck with this kind of technique. On the pavement arena that might not be a worry, in the controlled arena it certainly is (you'd lose a training partner for one thing).



Chokes and Strangles

As with all techniques, and I'm very sorry for repeating myself throughout this series of books (I have to really - I can't just presume that you have read them all, but if you haven't why the hell haven't you?). These being no different, they have to be practised until they are second nature.

In a real situation you are unlikely to have time to think about the mechanics of a hold. The chance may be there for a fleeting second and if missed, gone forever, missing a finishing move on the ground (or vertical for that matter) can be the difference between winning and losing. Winning and losing can mean, of course, the difference between life and death.

So work with repetition and review (repeat the techniques again and again in one session, at the next session start by reviewing what you covered in the last session). I remember when I broke my right wrist, I was in plaster, on and off, for nearly two years, for that two years I could work only with my left hand (it was a right messy job wiping my bum with the left hand, let me tell you) often doing ten thousand punches with it in one session.

There are different schools of thought on this matter and I can only vouch for myself and the many people I have taught, but think about it, look at the way they teach in schools, repetition and review, and look at the way that every army in existence trained and train. They repeat drill over and over and over until it becomes a part of the soldiers that they train. They train these soldiers for life and death situations and if it didn't work they wouldn't be doing it.

Chapter Two

Chokes and strangles from the side 4 1/4 pin

As detailed in *Pins: The Bedrock* and *The Escapes* in this series the side 4 1/4 is a strong pin and easy to defend but it is, primarily, a traveller's rest hold, a place where you rest on the way to a more potent pin like the scarf hold, the mount position or on the way to getting back to your feet. However, it does have some potency as regard to finishing holds, these we shall explore in this chapter.

It is par for the course with ground fighting that you don't chase or fight for a hold, the best are the ones that the opponent gives you when he tries to escape and leaves an opening that cannot be ignored. I have always stated, and I re-state it here, that to be an all round ground fighter you need to know several finishes, and escapes, from every position so that you never find yourself lost for a technique.

This will only come with having a vast repertoire and getting in loads of flight time to pressure test and perfect them.

Undoubtedly you will then end up with a small main artillery and huge support system, rainy day techniques if you like, as a back up.

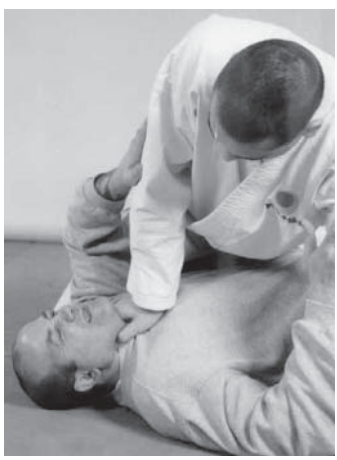
Lean and choke

Grab the opponent's left shoulder with your left hand and lie your left wrist across his throat, being sure to place the bony part across the wind pipe (or neck, depending upon how his head is lying). Turn your weight slightly over to the left side and lean/focus it on the technique. If he can he might try and turn over onto his belly to try and escape, if he does mount him from the back and employ the usual reverse mount choke.

Larynx grab

To be honest I go for this technique whenever the throat is open for it and I have a free hand. It is a real nitty gritty technique that can have a profound finishing effect on people who are not used to being attacked in the neck/throat area. It causes panic not least because we all associate the throat with breathing and not being able to breath with death. So indirectly the opponent, on a conscious or subconscious level, will associate any throat grab, squeeze/attack with death.

Even if it does not finish the opponent it usually persuades him to move to a different position, usually over onto his belly, where he will feel safe, but where he is, in actuality, not safe at all. So I use this technique to 'persuade' people to turn into a better position for me to utilise a more potent choke/strangle, if I finish with it then that is a 'Brucie bonus'.



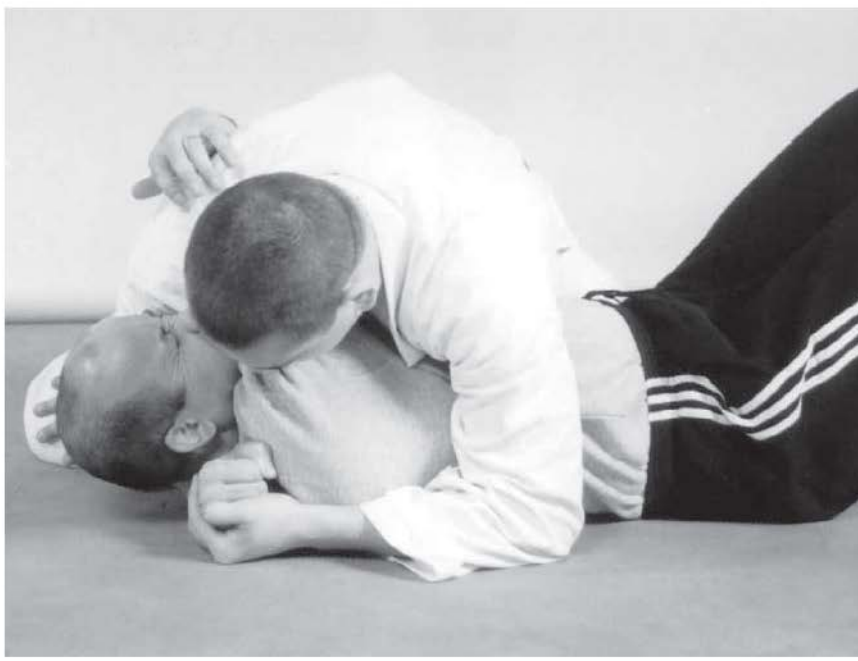
Triangular leg choke

If the opponent has his right arm between your legs, he will often do this to try and escape. Wrap your left leg past his face and under/around his head (if his head is not high enough to get under use your left elbow to force it up) bring your right leg through and hook your left instep around the back of your right knee, as tight as possible, and squeeze. Be careful in practise, this is a very powerful technique. It needs to be practised because the opponent will easily pull his head free if your do not secure it very quickly.

Arm trap choke

This is a broken choke where, like any choke/strangle that is broken by the opponent's arm, his own arm serves in making the choke more effective. Sweep his left arm, with your left arm, over and across his face, continue the anti- clockwise movement and feed your left arm underneath his head and back out the other side where you couple your left hand with your right hand. Make sure that the bone of your left wrist is across the opponent's neck, push your left shoulder into the opponent's trapped arm (this will cut of his carotid artery) for best effect. Squeeze tightly to secure the finish.

If you need more leverage you can climb to the mount position. Jump onto your toes and focus your weight behind the technique, or, jump from the side 4 1/4 into the jack-knife and focus the weight onto the technique from there. This is a very strong technique.



Under head choke

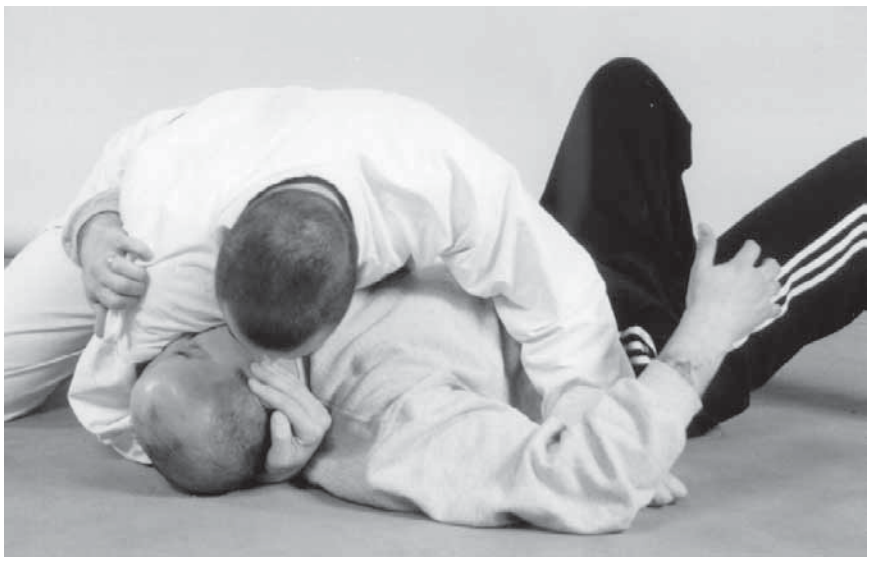
Feed your left arm under/around the opponent's head, from his left to his right, and feed your right arm under your own body and couple with your left, via the hands, and squeeze to secure the finish. If you need more leverage lean back as you pull, or even climb into the mount position and continue cranking the neck from that position.

Mouth turn and choke

Feed your left arm under the opponent's head, from his right to his left, and latch your middle finger into the corner of his mouth (or across his nose - in his eye socket), pull (yank if you really want to damage) the arm back under the head. In the same direction as you fed it through, forcing the opponent to turn, mount his back and secure the usual rear mount choke.

Smother

Wrap your left arm around the opponent's head/neck, from his left to his right, and lean over to your left so that your shoulder and back cover his mouth and nose. Lean your weight on so that the hold is secure - he will panic and bridge you off if it is not very tight. Alternatively you can place your left arm-pit across his mouth and nose and lean your weight onto the hold (this is especially effective if the arm-pit is a smelly one).



There are more techniques from this position that you will find yourself when practising all out ground fighting and, as long as they do what they are supposed to do, use them.

Chapter Three

Chokes and strangles from the Scarf Hold

The Scarf hold is one of the strongest pins on the ground. It's easy to defend and very difficult, even though there are several escape techniques, to get out of it once you are in. It doesn't hold a great host of choke and strangle techniques, though there are some, but it does lend itself to rest and move, (taking a rest on the ground or moving to a better, more potent pin like the mount).

I find this pin better for striking/attacking the opponent via the gouging and punching techniques, than actually choking him out. Many inexperienced fighters do panic though when held in the scarf hold because it is such a controlling position, this usually forces an in-fight release of adrenalin that will make them very strong for a few seconds - and empty their fuel tanks just as quickly, others still capitulate because they mistake the in-fight release for fear.

The Guillotine

Lean across the opponent's face and grab, with your left hand, your own right biceps and allow the bony part of your left wrist to lie across the opponent's neck/throat. Lean all your weight on to the technique for better effect. If the neck needs exposing more to open up the carotid artery for attack hit the left side of his face (far side) with your left elbow to force his face to turn to his own right before executing the choke.

Straight choke

If the opponent's right arm comes free, which can often be the case, you can tie it up in several ways, these are detailed in Volume One and Four of this series. One of these ways is to pull his arm underneath you and sit on his biceps, this will then leave his neck/throat open to a clean choke. Your right arm is already in position so just couple it up with your left hand, being sure that your right wrist, the bony part, is running along the opponent's neck.

If you want to expose his neck more use your left hand to pull it in to position, via the eyes/nose etc, then lean your body onto the head to keep it still, then couple the hands together and execute the choke. As you squeeze your arms to tighten the choke simultaneously lean your weight forward, as well as helping to tighten the choke this also acts as a semi smother.

Triangular leg choke

This is especially effective if the opponent constantly lifts his head in an attempt to sit up. As he lifts his head sit through with your rear left leg and hook it over and around his neck. Wrap the instep around the back of the right leg and squeeze with the thighs - a very strong cranking choke that should always be employed with great care. As a foot note here on the triangular leg choke, it can often take a long time to get the right feel with this technique.

Many do not feel supple enough or feel that their legs are not long enough to employ it to effect. It took me six months to really find the 'feel' with leg chokes with many failures along route, but once you've got it it's a real strong finish. I've KO'd a few opponents with this technique (once or twice by mistake) and it has become one of my favourite, and best employed. So take heart, don't abandon it too early and if you are not supple enough then get supple, short legs need not impede this technique either, extra practise will compensate. The number of people who have tried this technique and failed at the first attempt and have then discarded it as 'un-workable', is untrue, don't be one of these people.

Arm trap and choke

Again this is an ideal technique if the opponent frees his right arm and tries to use it to escape, usually by pushing your face backwards. As his hand touches your face turn your face sharply to your own right and parry the arm with your left hand across your face. Then quickly lie across it, it will be now trapped across his own neck/throat. Couple your right hand to your left and squeeze (and lean forward) to finish.

If you need more leverage you can either jump to the mount position or the jack-knife, on the balls of your feet, and focus your weight behind the technique - a very strong finishing technique.

Fist/finger choke

Use the fist or fingers of your left hand to attack the opponent's throat. Push the finger or the fist hard into the side of the opponent's wind pipe, or from this position you can simply grab the opponent's larynx and employ the larynx grab.

Smother

Let your arm-pit/shoulder fall over the opponent's nose and mouth and lean all your weight on his face to block his air ways. If his face is to the side then use your left hand to push, via any pain or pressure point, into position. From here, to add weight and leverage to the technique, I usually jump to the jack-knife position on my toes and focus my weight behind the technique.

Chapter Four

Chokes and strangles from the Upper 4 1/4 Hold down

This is another travellers rest hold that, though a strong pin and easy to defend, does not hold a lot of finishing potency. It is a good place to control and rest and, if you wish, get back to your feet, it is also excellent for travelling to the better suited mount position - a finisher's paradise.

Smother

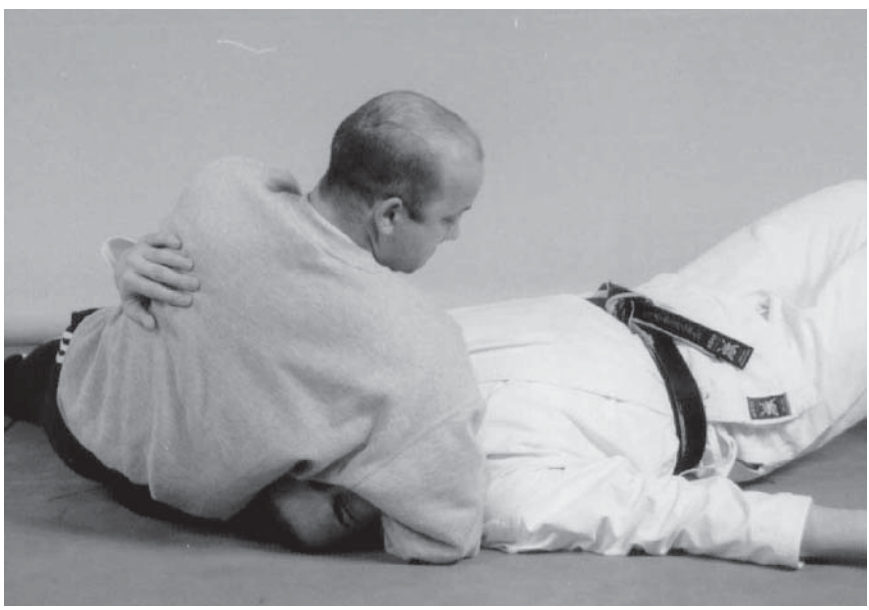
Simply lie your chest over the opponent's mouth and nose and focus your weight to close the air ways. If the opponent's head is to the side use poking techniques to force his head into an upright position.

Larynx Attack

Bring your hands through to the side of the opponent's neck and jam your thumbs into either side, and underneath his wind pipe, try to make the thumbs touch for best effect. If this doesn't stop him it may well encourage him to turn to his belly to escape, if he does spin around, mount him from the back, from here the usual reverse mount choke is yours.

Reverse scarf Hold choke

Feed your right (or left) arm under/around the opponent's head, from your right to your left, and couple at the hands with your left arm. Sit through into reverse scarf hold and, as you turn, force the opponent's head to your right by pushing it with your back. If you find it easier you can get the opponent's head in the right position, exposing the neck, at the beginning of the move by poking his eye or cheek with your fingers before sitting through into the reverse scarf hold. Tighten the arms and lean backwards to finish the move.



Turn-reverse mount choke

By attacking the opponent's eyes or face with your fingers you can force him to turn onto his belly to escape the pain, as he turns quickly spin around his back into a reverse mount and execute the choke from there. If you do not get, or indeed go for, the reverse mount and the opponent kneels up from the belly position hook your arm under/around his neck, from your right to your left, and couple at the other side with your left hand to make the choke, lift upwards and squeeze the lock to finish. All finishes from the kneeling position will be heavily detailed in *Fighting From your Knees* in this series.

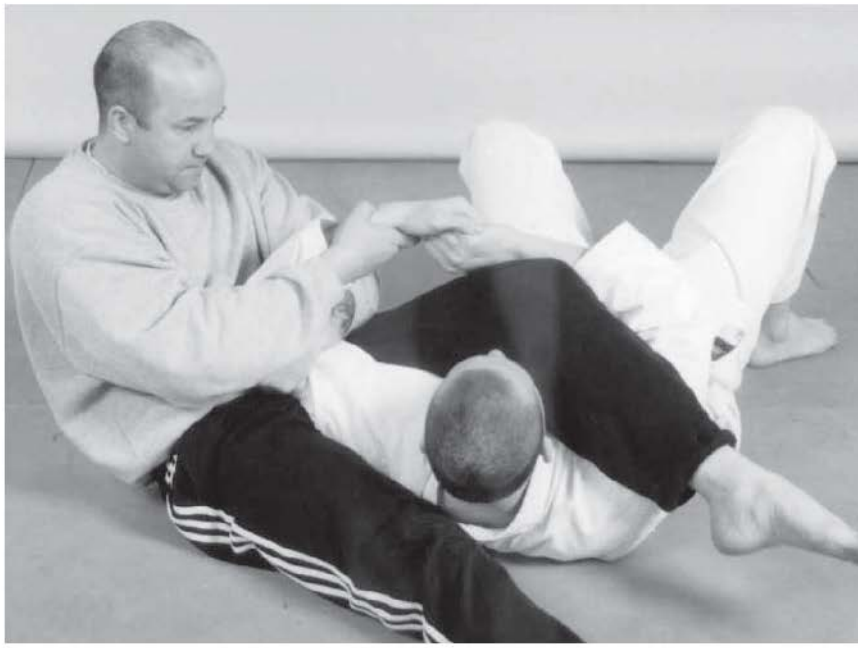
Chokes and strangles from the Upper 4 1/4 Hold down

Leg choke from Juji Gatame (arm bar)

Often when you go for an arm bar (to be detailed in Volume 4 of this series) the opponent will grip his left hand to his right to block the bar. If this happens there are a number of things that you can do, this book being a book on C & S I will keep it generic. Feed your left foot through the opponent's arms, as illus, and allow your right leg to sit at the top of his head. Pull at his arms as though trying to break his grip, this will pull his head off the floor and allow you to wrap your left leg, from the front to the back, around his neck.

Wrap the instep of your left foot around the back of your right knee and squeeze very tightly with your thighs - again beware, this is a very powerful technique that cranks the neck and wrenches the back as well as procuring the choke.

Chokes and strangles from the Upper 4 1/4 Hold down



Chapter Five

Chokes and strangles from the scissor guard position

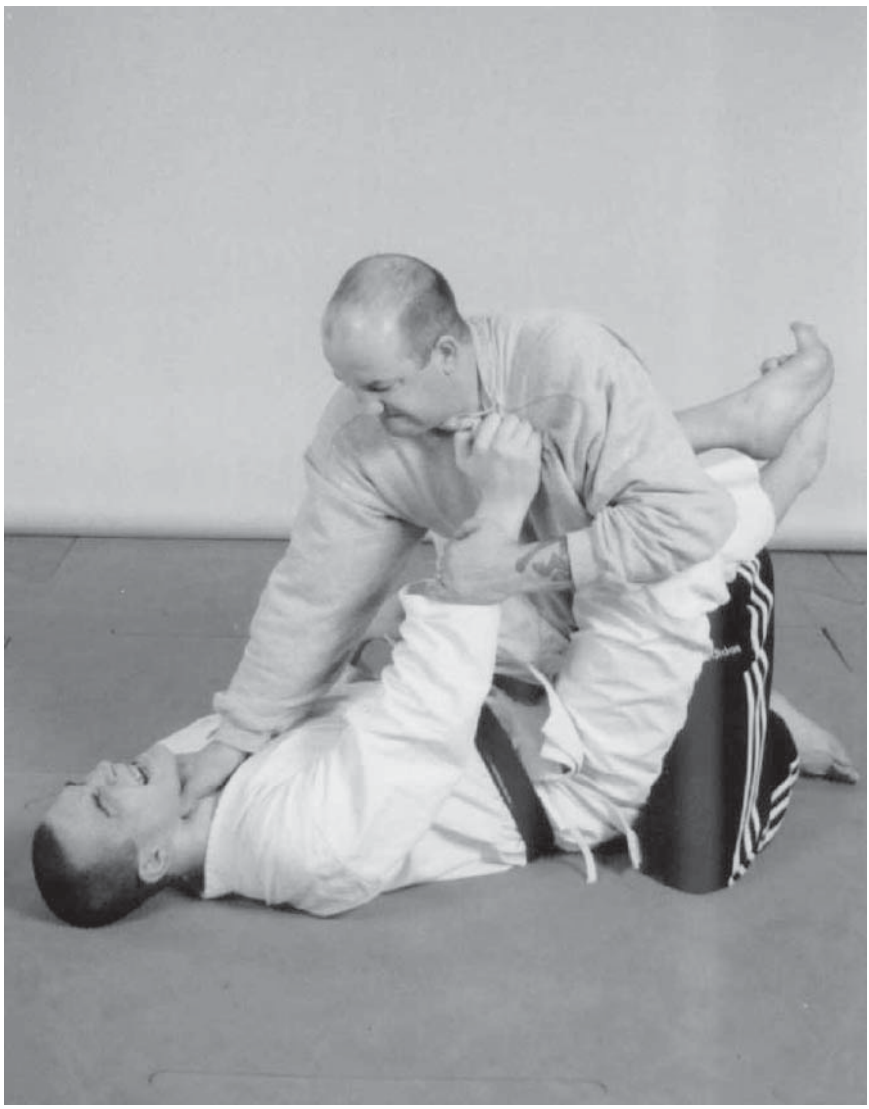
I use these chokes more as a means of getting from one place to another, more specifically to get from the opponent's scissor guard to the mount position. The scissor guard is a very strong defensive position that a veteran ground fighter can hold for a very long time, in fact some one like Royce Gracie (pronounced Hoyce) has been know to hold an opponent here for half an hour or more waiting for him to make a move so that he can finish. Getting past it can be difficult and is covered in depth in *Arm Bars and Joint Locks*.

Basically speaking there is not a great deal of leverage from inside the guard position to really finish with a choke but attempts at a choke will force the opponent to defend and whilst he is concentrating on defence he is not thinking about holding his scissor guard. As Marc McFann said to me in a seminar that he held for the BCA (actually he said it to us all, I just thought it'd sound better if he said it just to me) he

knows people that can bench press 400lbs and they can squat 500lbs, but they can't do both at once. So distracting an opponent forces him to fight on two fronts which means he is splitting his resources down the middle. Having said all that I have finished from here with the following, also.

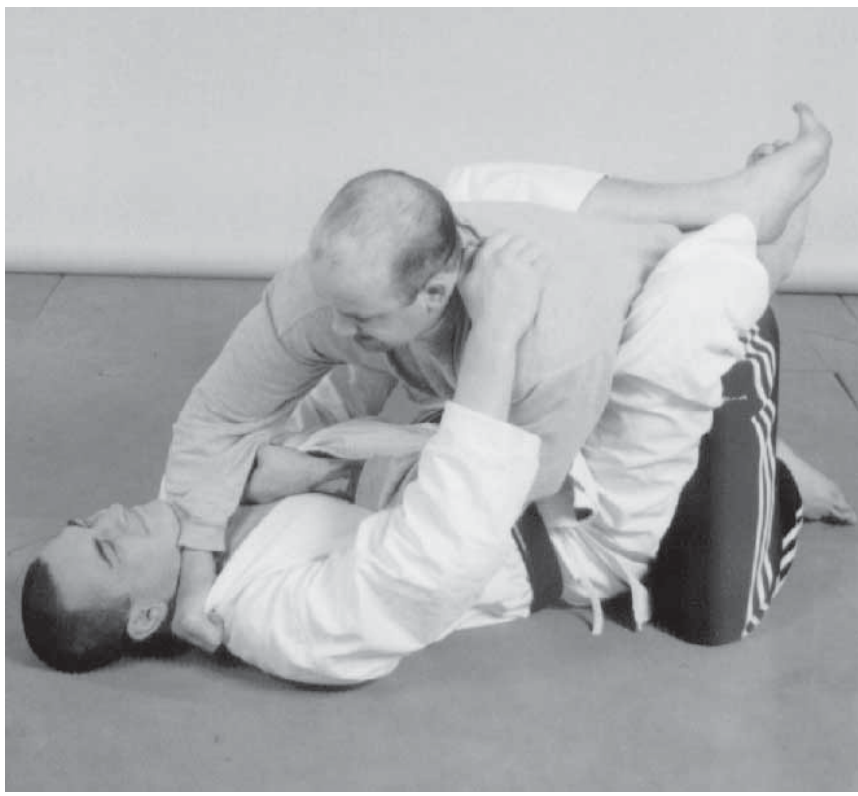
Larynx grab

Simply reach through and grab the opponent's larynx, being sure to avoid the strong neck muscles, and grip as hard as you can, try to make your fingers meet at the back of his throat for best effect.



Lapel Choke

Now this is a very strong choke and, if secured, an excellent finisher from any position that allows it. Obviously, it relies on the opponent wearing a jacket (or a tie would suffice). Grab the opponent's right lapel, palm down, as deeply to the back as you can, with your right hand and grab his left lapel, slightly lower down, with your left hand, palm down. Pull down with your left hand and forward with your right hand to tighten the opponent's jacket around his neck and throat to finish the hold.



Chapter Six

Drilling

As with every volume in this series I shall finish with the drilling chapter. This is where you isolate a technique and drill it again and again to load it into that computer we call a brain.

We are using the compliancy of an opponent here to allow us to drill fast and smooth and get as much flight time in 'doing' as we can. The more reps the better, and the more training that you do on these concepts the quicker you will become proficient at them.

As with the other books and drilling in general I will give you a few of the drills from various positions that I practice myself, but bearing in mind that you can, and should, drill every technique to distraction if you want it to be yours. If you only half do it you'll only be half good and if you're only half good the techniques will fail for you probably more often than they work. 1,000 days to learn technique, 10,000 days to polish.

Drills from the Scarf Hold

Sit through and leg choke

Sit though and wrap your left leg around the opponent's neck and couple with your right and squeeze, then move back to the original position and start again. 30 reps at a fast and smooth pace-both sides.

Arm trap choke

Trap the opponent's arm across his neck, couple your hands and jump to the jack-knife, back to the start position, release the opponent's arm and then start again. 30 repetitions-both sides.

Drills from the mount

Turn and choke

Throw 4 simulated punches to the opponent's face, when he turns to his belly put on the choke and then release and let him turn back. Do the same again to the opposite side. 50 repetitions each side.

Finger turn and choke

Feed your left arm under the opponent's head, grab his lip and turn and choke, let him turn back and do the same to the opposite side. 50 repetitions each side.

Trap arm-turn and choke

Knock the opponent's arm across, lean on it, feed it under his head, pull with your left hand and push his elbow with your right, turn him, choke him. Let him turn back to the original position and start again the opposite side. 50 repetitions each side.

Drills from the side 4 1/4

Lean and choke

Grab the opponent's shoulder with your left arm and lean your wrist into his throat. 20 repetitions, jump over to the opposite side and do the same from there.

Triangular leg choke

Sit through past the opponent's face with your left leg and wrap it around his head/neck, bring your right leg forward and wrap your left instep round the back of your right knee and squeeze. 20 reps, jump to the other side of the opponent and repeat.

Mouth turn and choke

Feed your left arm under the opponent's head and place your finger in the corner of his mouth, pull him onto his belly and secure a reverse mount choke, go back to the original position and repeat 20 times. Do the same from the opposite side.

There are of course many other drills, this is just a selection to whet your appetite. Make as many drills as you can and practice them diligently, not forgetting that, at some point you will need to wrestle all out and learn to place the techniques against the opponent's will - that's when you will really start learning. Try and make up your own drills using all the different C & S from around the body, use compliancy to develop the technique so that it is smooth and speedy, then when you have it, take it in to the uncompliant arena and put the pressure on.

Conclusion

Another part of the jigsaw, and one of the most important pieces because it finishes a situation so clinically and so finally, but, as I said and I do not apologise for repeating myself. It is not much good with out all the other pieces, the picture is not complete until all the pieces have been collated and fitted in place. The deeper you dig with ground fighting the deeper it gets and it can take a long long time to really master the art, but with the base of pins, the escapes and then the finishes you are well and truly on your way.

These then are the pieces to the jigsaw, you must wrestle off to fit those together to make the whole picture or you'll just end up with a box full of pieces that are neither use nor ornament. So get the flight time in and, no matter how painful, exhausting, laborious or confusing it may at times seem keep working. Before you know it the picture will be complete, and, as a consequence you will be complete also.

REAL HEAD, KNEES & ELBOWS

Head, knee and elbow techniques from every range.

GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

Real Head, Knees & Elbows

Geoff Thompson

SUMMERSDALE

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About the Author:

Geoff Thompson has to be one of the most recognised and controversial martial arts writers and teachers of this century, with over 20 best-selling books and 20 instructional videos on the contemporary role of martial art to his name. His work is both innovative and thought-provoking. As an ambassador for the martial arts he has appeared on national and international television and radio – for several years as the *BBC Good Morning* self-defence expert – talking about and giving advice on self-protection and related subjects.

He has taught his unique method of self-protection to the police, the Royal Marine commandos, in local government, on Excel Bodyguard training camps and also on the professional circuit. Geoff's first book *Watch My Back – A Bouncer's Story* (released in the USA by Paladin Press) about his nine years working as a nightclub doorman is widely recognised as a cult book. His other books have also been highly successful. He has appeared in numerous publications including: *SG's Martial Arts*, *Combat*, *Traditional Karate*, *Fighters*, *Terry O'Neill's Fighting Arts International*, *Muscle Mag* (Britain – USA), *Black Belt Magazine* (USA) *Fighters* (Sweden) and

Australasian Fighting Arts (Australia). He is currently Sub-Editor of *Martial Arts Illustrated*. He has also featured in mainstream glossy magazines such as *Loaded*, *Maxim* and *Esquire* and has published several articles with *GQ* Magazine (Britain – Paris).

Geoff has to be one of the most practised instructors of our day with a long list of combat qualifications. He is presently a Sambo Russian Wrestling coach (Moscow Sambo Federation), Olympic Greco Roman Wrestling Coach (FILA), Olympic Free Style Level 3 Wrestling Coach (FILA) Ju-Jitsu coach, British Combat Association Coach, EKGB (Karate) 5th Dan, JKA (Japan Karate Association) 2nd Dan, Shoalin Modga gung fu 1st Dan, BJA (British Judo Association) 1st Dan, ABA boxing coach and BTBC Muay Thai boxing coach. He is a former UK weapons champion and is trained in the use of the Defensive Flashlight and the PR24 Side Handled Baton. He has also trained in Aikido and weapons.

In 1997 Geoff was flown out to the United States by Chuck Norris and Richard Norton to teach his unique method of self-protection on their international martial arts seminar alongside martial art greats: Benny 'the jet' Urquediz and Rigan and Jean-Jacques Machado.

As well as his books and videos Geoff has written a feature film based on his life and 12 television plays based on his bouncer books. Although recognised as an international authority on the art of self-protection, his work in reality and cross training in combat is still thought of as heresy in some quarters of the martial arts world.

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Foreword

by Dave Turton 6th Dan

When Geoff asked me to write a foreword to his latest work not only was I delighted as always to help a close friend, but also, it made me think strongly about what I wanted to say on the subject of head, knees and elbows.

As I am sure you will be aware, Geoff is heavily into the practical side of martial art, and any method of combat that involves reality will be close to his heart. So you can be sure that Geoff is the right man to guide you through the do's and don'ts of working with these close-range weapons. Therefore reading this text (if you follow the advice given) will be well worth the effort.

I have been involved with the real side of combat for more years than I care to remember. And in all my time the 3 weapons Geoff is describing herein, were not only a strong part of my main artillery, they were often the only options I had in real fights.

From the very beginning I was taught how useful these weapons are, and drilled long and hard on their uses, and the more I became involved in real and often very violent situations on the doors, the more I gave respect to them.

Treat these techniques with the respect they deserve, work hard on both their technical aspects, and their applications, and I know you will be well rewarded should you ever need to call on their service in a real fight.

A few anecdotes may serve to illustrate just why I believe that knees, elbows and heads are more than just support techniques!

The first time I witnessed the effectiveness of the close-in work was as an attacker on a 1st Dan grading in Wales, at the headquarters of the Goshinkwai. I was 3rd Kyu at the time, and tried to come in low and sneaky to the right hand side of the would-be black Belt taking on multiple attackers as a part of his grading . . . I was rewarded with a beautiful inward vertical elbow strike to my left ear. I saw more stars than Patrick Moore as I dropped down onto one knee. Still dazed and listening to what sounded like a chorus in my head, I was rudely awakened with a left knee to the other side of my head. At this point I lost all interest in the grading and

can vouch first hand for the effectiveness of elbows and knees.

Coming round (moments later) at the side of the mat I realised, thanks to the rather rough lesson I had just been given, that with the right range and angle, knee and elbow attacks are devastating.

The originator of our system, the Late Great Kenshiro Abbe, was a firm believer in close range combat, specifically head, knees and elbows . . . often when using a Judo-style grip on an opponent in a Gi, Abbe would whip in a knee to the outside of the thigh prior to a throw, or perform two or even three fast headbutts to weaken the opponent for throwing.

On the floor Abbe rarely used any other strikes other than elbows and head to set up his adversary for a punishing hold.

We often practised the elbow as a long range attacking move: just trying to elbow could psyche the opponent out.

The elbow is one of the few weapons that are not limited by the angle you are to your opponent . . . whether he is at your side, rear

or in front, there is an elbow strike that will fit the scenario.

In the seventies we were treated to the arrival of three top Thai Boxers, namely Woody, Toddy and Ken, as they were affectionately known. The Thais have taken the art of knees and elbows to a level most of us would be thrilled to reach . . . I saw just how good late in 1979 at a club in Oldham called the Cats Whiskers. I was on the door, and so was Ken (Master Sken) . . . during my routine walk about the inside of the club, I heard a commotion at the front door. We had been visited by several Maoris from a touring rugby team: the smallest was about 16 stones. By the time I had crossed the floor Ken had taken four of them to KO using only knees and elbows. I was astonished at the sheer power of these moves. I arrived just in time to see the last one hit the deck. Ken hit him in the head with a hooking elbow, grabbed him around the head with both hands and then followed immediately with a jumping knee to the head of the Maori who fell unconscious with his three friends. My only involvement was in helping to drag the victims away from the door.

On another occasion, at a less than salubrious establishment in Rochdale known as the Lamplighter (the Lamplighter's motto was 'have

a laugh at the Lamplighter or cause trouble . . . either way you go home in stitches'). I was attempting to walk a would-be troublemaker to the doors when, as I found out later, his big (I mean Big) brother took exception to the fact and lifted me about 9 inches off the floor. Thanks to my training, I managed three fast rear headbutts, and when he let go of my arms to protect his face I followed with a rear right elbow to his right ear. When he dropped to the floor I finished with a left rear elbow to the pubes . . . the only really hard work was dragging him off the premises.

You might be surprised to know that the head is used as a weapon tool in most cultures around the world, indeed the Eskimos, because of the amount of protective clothing they had to wear to fight off the cold, often used close grips and headbutts as their main artillery. The (African) Capoeira champions have several headbutts in their system, as do the Bantu tribe. These are mainly wrestlers who use the 'head' as a means of releasing holds. They all practise on impact equipment. However, if you decide to do likewise, practise slowly at first: the head must be 'set' and 'formed' and not 'upset' and 'deformed'.

Getting back to the book, I know Geoff is well versed in using all these methods in real situations . . . so much so, in fact, I have often thought that Geoff hit with his head because it was his least vulnerable weapon. What do they say, where there is no sense there is no feeling? But I have to say this isn't true (after all I am training with him this weekend). No, Geoff uses his head in many ways in real situations and using the head as a weapon is a method well worth the effort.

Power is generated inside the body mainly from the waist, hips and legs working with muscular contractions to produce internal energy ready for transmission to the limbs. As with perfecting most things in life, the reality is repetition and what is repetition if it isn't boring? And no one can accuse these close-range attacks of being 'flashy' or 'showy' . . . but if you want to make them workable then repetition and 'boring' is where it is at. These techniques *need* to be 'drilled'. They need to be practised from the correct distances and from multiple angles. They need to be practised in both vertical and horizontal positions. They also need to be worked on the heavy bag for power development. Often the sheer hard work needed to make these weapons useful in a real

scenario is their downfall because whilst these techniques do work, most students do not.

Read this book; it will show you how to train head, knees and elbows to their best effect, and you're getting the advice from one of the world's foremost combat authors and practitioners.

Head, knees and elbows are weapons *par excellence*, but reading this book will only make you aware of them – following the invaluable advice of its author is what will take them from paper to pavement.

Happy reading.

Dave Turton
6th Dan Goshinkwai Combat

Introduction

Welcome to *Real Head, Knees and Elbows*, at long last. I have been threatening to write this book for, oh, I don't know how long – apologies for its delay.

This is the last in the *Real Series* and, basically I have written it to tie up the loose ends from the other *Real* books. Not that this text is any less important than the others – far from it – a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. It has to be said that I do consider the techniques herein to be a part, a very valuable part, of the support system. I always consider 'hands' to be the main artillery and the most effective weapon in the race for good, physical self-protection. This is primarily because punching range is the one most given in a live scenario. This is just my opinion however, I have many friends, as will be evident throughout the text, who employ either head knees or elbows as a main artillery technique and very effectively I have to say. I use them as a support system to back my hands should they let me down or should the situation not favour that range.

Real Head, Knees & Elbows

Neither head, knee or elbow techniques will work for you unless you master them, unless you make them your own. I have used all three successfully in real situations, on several occasions. However I have to be honest also and say that, as a younger man still struggling with real violence I have also used all three unsuccessfully. Only good luck and/or providence pulled me through when the techniques, or rather my poor execution of them, fell apart like a cheap suit. My head butts were badly aimed and I nearly knocked myself out of two occasions, my knees were slow, predictable and pushy and did little more than expend energy that was vitally needed in other areas of the fight and my elbows just couldn't find the right range. It was with my dismal failures in mind that I took to perfecting these potentially devastating techniques making them explosive, accurate and economical, and also using them when the range was favourable as opposed to just blasting them out willy-nilly.

I was in a good position 'on the door' because people were constantly picking fights with me. Seemingly (to the uninitiated) the weakest member of a hard door, I had ample opportunity to try lots of different techniques to see what worked and what did not and to perfect the

techniques that I felt had potential. I know that this might sound like a very violent statement, I also realise that in this period of my life I was a very violent man. However, I believe that whether I was right or wrong to get into so many fights, you still want to learn from my experience. What is also worth remembering, is the fact that although I used these situations to practice my technique, they were unsolicited attacks upon me. I never looked for trouble and all of those potential opponents that allowed me to talk them down, walked away without a bashing. Those that got a bashing were those that wanted to fight with me for whatever reason. So I perfected my techniques in the field.

I think I should also underline at this point in the book that just because I favour hands in the live scenario does not mean anything other than, 'I favour hand techniques'. You, like some of my friends may not favour hands. If that is the case try to tailor these concepts to fit your favoured main artillery. Don't become a clone of Geoff Thompson or Joe Bloggs or John Doe or whoever. If the concepts are sound, which in this, and all my texts, they surely are, then mould your technique around these concepts. Don't imitate, innovate.

Try to work around the contemporary enemy and environment, that is, don't try and throw a kick a punch a knee and elbow etc, if the range is wrong. Work with the energy and dimensions that the situation gives you. One of the reasons that I use these techniques as a support rather than main artillery is the very close proximity that they demand if they are going to work. I generally use head, knees and elbows when I have been grabbed, using the opponent's clothing as leverage. And even then I tend to use them in combination to finish an opponent. Very rarely will one of these techniques singularly finish the opponent.

As I said before, and forgive me for repeating myself, some of my friends have made these techniques their own and do attack with them outside of vertical grappling range. People like Master Sken, the legendary Thai boxer, has had tremendous success with knees and elbows in real situations. Fighters like Tony Roberts very rarely used anything other than his head and could, from any range, demolish whole teams with his butting ability. Although they are very much specialist, they do serve to demonstrate the awesome potential of the head, knees and elbows. These latter techniques fill the, often large, gaps in the fighting artillery, between punching, kicking and grappling, they help to

complete the circle as it were. The techniques in this book, like all techniques really (and like all things in life) need constant maintenance or they will atrophy.

Chapter One

The Head

'Tony had to be carrying 22 stone over a 6 foot frame with a large belly at the front and legs like tree trunks. His face was also big, but as charismatic as they come, with scars running this way and that through his cheeks and eyebrows from several stabbings in some of the worst shit holes this side of 1920s Shanghai. He'd been stabbed by brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers in his time on the door. If we are talking about being stabbed Tony is the metaphoric pin-cushion. Once, when restraining a youth in a nightclub in the centre of town, he felt a sharp pain under his right armpit. He thought little more of it until he let the lad go and dropped his arm only to find a stiletto blade sticking out of his ribs. 'I don't remember leaving that there?!' he said to his side kick before collapsing on the floor.

Another time he opened the doors of a nightclub, now closed down because of the heavy volume of gratuitous violence, to be faced

with a mad axe man, already in full swing with a rusty, heavy wood chopping axe. Sure that this was to be his *coup de grace*, because there was no way he could stop the axe from finding a bed in his skull, Tony closed his eyes and awaited the most dreaded finale. It never came. Only a heavy thud above his head. He carefully opened one eye and then the other only to discover that the axe had been swung so high and so hard that it had hit the top frame of the door and stuck fast. The wielder was swinging off the axe to try and release it so that he could 'try again'. It turned out to be a guy that he'd thrown out earlier in the night. He desperately tugged and pulled at the axe in an attempt to free it.

Tony, not one to miss such a golden opportunity, hit him with a head butt that separated him from the axe – and the ground – and sent him sprawling into the road like he'd been shot from a cannon. He lay, unconscious, in a bloody heap. The damage was so substantial that the ambulance driver later said he thought the guy had been the victim of a hit and run car accident. The axe man lay motionless for the best part of twenty minutes before the ambulance actually came and scraped up his remains and took him off to hospital. They couldn't straighten his nose, said it looked as though it had been put through a blender.

As you have probably noticed Tony was a 'head' man. And a master thereof. He could head butt with missile accuracy from as far away as six foot and as close as whispering in your ear. I never saw any one survive the mighty wrath of a Tony R head butt. He also taught me to use the head and though it is not my main artillery technique it is a favoured strike. I tend to use it spontaneously – ask any of my sparring partners – if the situation gives me the right openings.'

Extract from *On The Door*

The head has to be one of the most effective techniques available, if used correctly. If used incorrectly the head can be as dangerous to the attacker, as to the recipient. Surprisingly very few people ever fully get to grips with this devastating phenomenon. Many feel that they are going to hurt their own head should they use it as an attacking tool to the face of an assailant. This is sad really because, as Tony 'the head' once said to me, if you hands are tied up the head is another hand. This technique could also be used by women if they had a mind to include it in their curriculum. Again, they disallow it from their training because they feel that butting someone in the face is not very lady-like. That's exactly why they should use it. No man is every going to expect a women to butt

them in the face simply because 'it's not lady-like'. The truth is though, no effective technique is lady-like, they are all ugly, at least the effective ones anyway.

But that's the price you pay if you don't want to be raped up an ally by some low life who has decided to step outside the law to satisfy his lustful urges. If you are talking about real encounters, the blood and snot type that occur on our streets every single day of the week, then nothing effective should be disqualified from your artillery.

I remember talking on a seminar of instructors once, and I happened to mention that biting was an excellent technique to use if you were in the shit. One or two of the instructors shot me disapproving glances, one even shook his head and 'tutted'. They said that they couldn't bite another person, yet when I watched them training the were practising knife hand attacks to the throat, finger strikes to the eyes etc – maybe someone can explain to me the difference here. How is whacking someone in the throat, a killing technique, any better, or any more wholesome than biting someone. Generally a bite is a superfluous attack in that, although painful to the recipient, it is rarely life threatening. It might leave an ugly scar but it is

unlikely to blind them, like an eye attack, or kill them, like a throat attack. Wake up please. Only recently, on the national news there was a report of a man killed outside his local fish and chip shop after a 'minor' argument with some men in the shop. I wonder whether they, or any of the attackers out there, are worried about what they attack innocents with. Somehow I think not!

The key factor in the success of the head butt is to keep your attack below the opponent's eye line. Anywhere above is potentially dangerous to the bestower. Paradoxically you, the person employing the butt, must use only that which is above the eye line as an attacking tool, or again you may end up with as many injuries as your opponent. You can attack effectively with the head in any one of five different ways:

1) From left to right, using the right corner of your forehead to attack

2) From right to left, using the left corner of your forehead to attack

3) A forward thrusting head butt using the left, centre or right corner of your forehead to attack

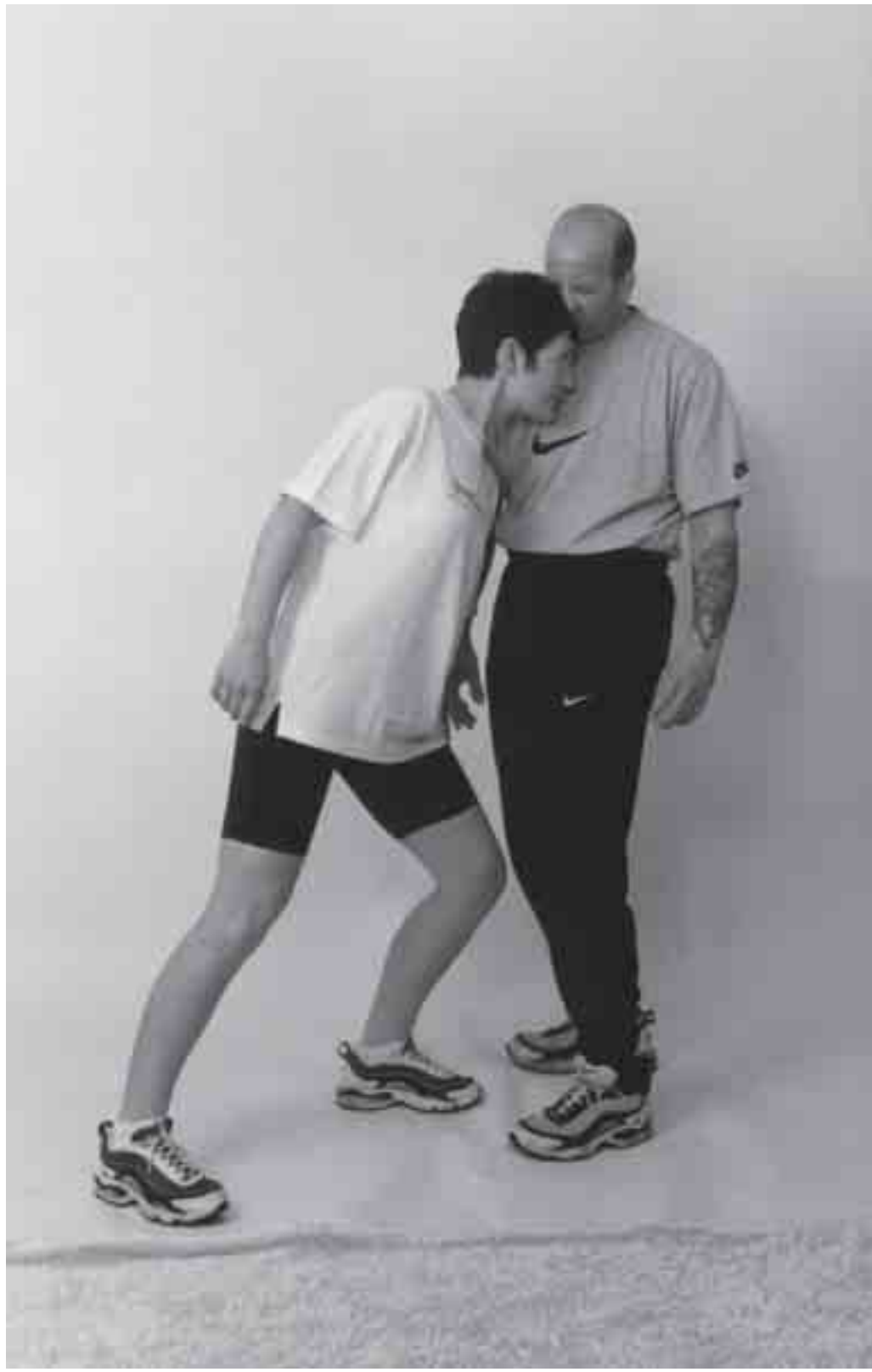
4) Attack upward with the crown of your head
5) Attack backward with the back of your head

The butt you choose will vary according to the circumstances in which you find yourself and the technique that you favour. They are all close range techniques that can be employed with or without the support of an opponent's clothing. Power in the butt relies upon two major things. Firstly, the whiplashing effect of your head as you lurch forward to attack – the body weight being projected slightly before the head, secondly the momentum of the propelling body weight (which should still be travelling forward as the head strikes its target), adding weight and travel to the said attack.

Left to right:

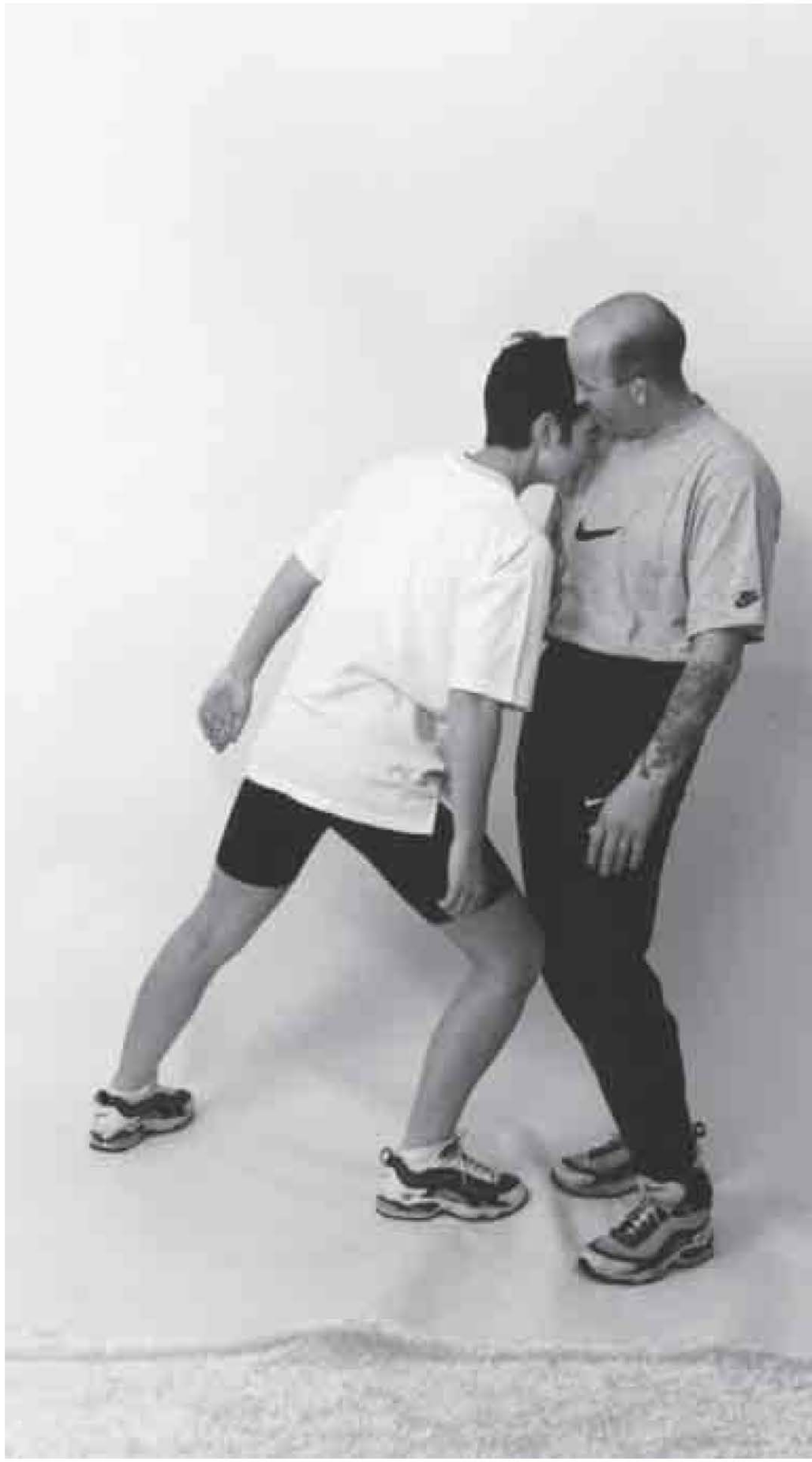
Please try to follow the pictures here, they will show the technique better than a description. It goes without saying that I would ask a question before attacking, so as to engage the opponent's brain, thus ensuring a window of entry. Lurch your body forward followed by your head. The left corner of your forehead should follow the body weight travel and whiplash into the opponent's face or jaw. If you are actually in a vertical embrace and have a grip of the

opponent's clothing at the time of your attack then pull them, via their attire rapidly toward the butt.



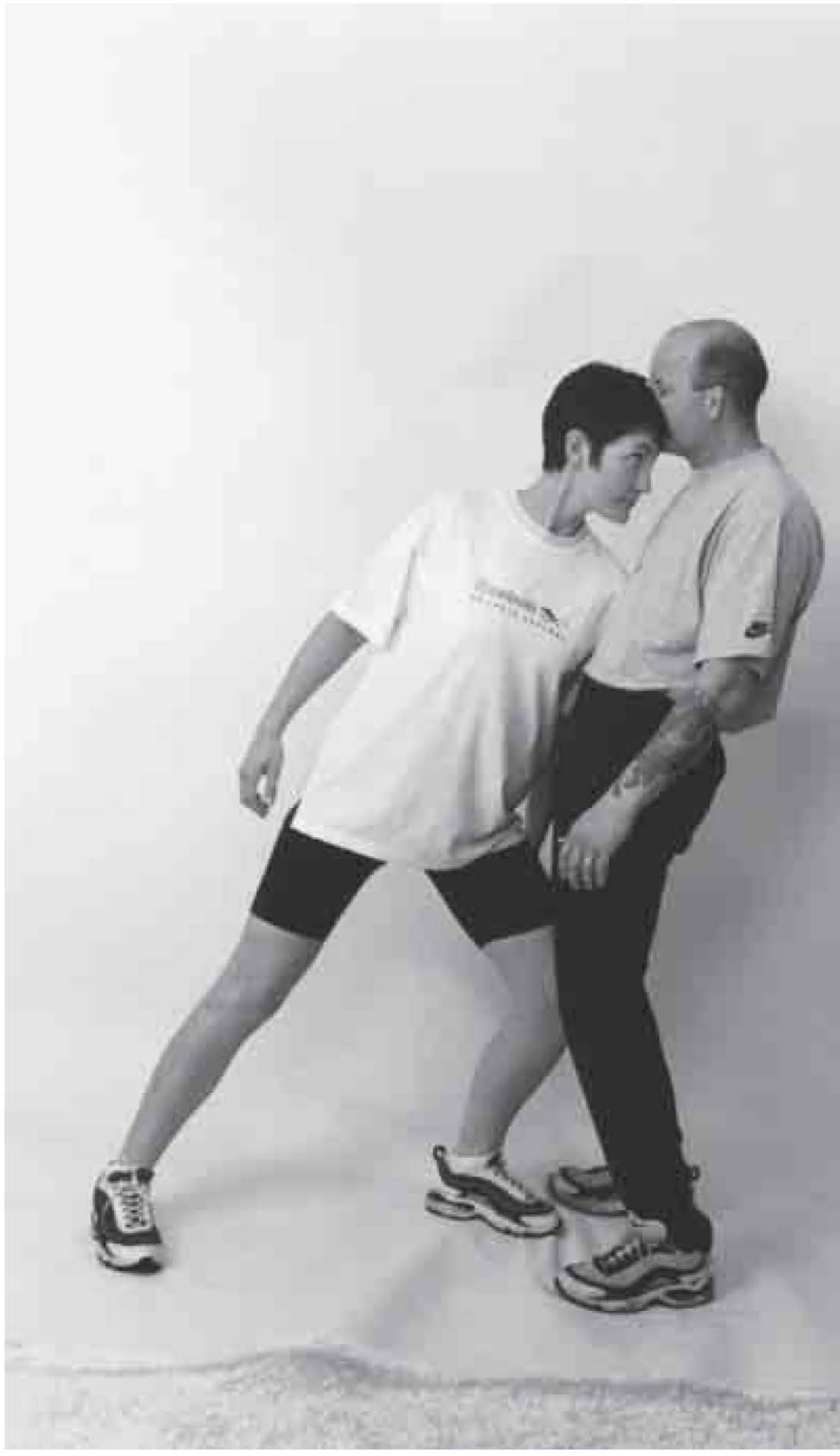
Right to left:

Exactly the same here, only you are attacking from right to left, as opposed to from left to right. Lurch your body forward followed by your head. The right corner of your forehead should follow the body weight travel and whiplash into the opponent's face or jaw. If you are actually in a vertical embrace and have a grip of the opponent's clothing at the time of your attack then pull them, via the attire rapidly toward the butt.



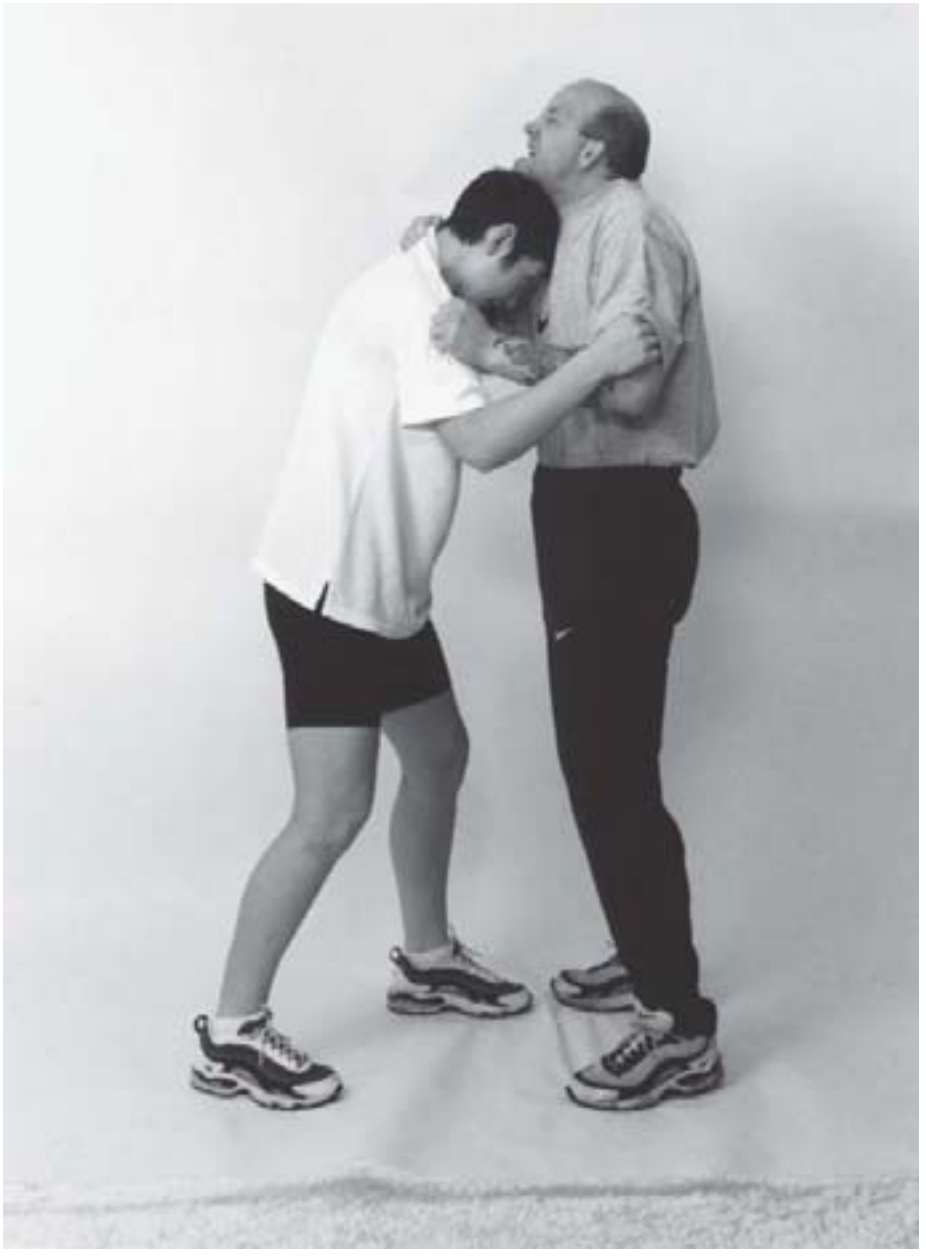
Forward thrusting head butt:

Lurch your body directly forward followed by the front of your forehead (or either side of the head if you prefer), whiplashing it into the opponent's face or jaw. Care should be taken when attacking from the front not to hit the opponent's teeth. Although your attack will do the damage you will also incur injury. I know of many fighters that have received terrible injuries from hitting the teeth of an adversary. I myself spent a week in hospital to remove an abscess from the knuckles of my right hand after punching an adversary in the teeth. So beware, the teeth are a no no.



Upward head butt:

Generally this attack is employed from within vertical grappling range, when your forehead is in the region of the opponent's chest, as per illustration – or anywhere below his chin. From this position thrust the head upward as rapidly as you can, attacking the opponent's chin with the front crown of your own head. Drive right through for maximum effect.



'I didn't do anything at first, except try to get up. As I did our heads clashed. The back of mine with the front of his. I felt the weight lift off my back as he rolled over and groaned. I don't think I've ever moved so fast in all my life. I was up and away down the tow path like a shot.'
Extract from *Unleash the Lioness*.

As you can see from this extract, the head can be devastating and effective, even when used by accident. This woman, in the midst of an attempted rape scenario felled her attacker by accident with a devastating reverse head butt.

Reverse head butt:
This attack is potentially one of the most dangerous head attacks because of the pure surprise of it. Of course, like all things, it needs much practice for it to be instinctive. This attack is only useful when your opponent is directly behind you. Either grabbing you or preparing to grab you. If you have not been grabbed but the attacker is about to grab you then use your body weight in the attack by lurching backwards, whiplashing the back of your head into the face of the opponent.

If the attacker has you in a bear hug type scenario, there for neutralising your body weight bring your head slightly forward and lash it back,

hard and as many time as it takes to release his grip, into his face.

Whenever it is possible I always bend at the knee when I butt, so that I can explode the attack into the target. Also by bending at the knee I lower myself below the opponent's eye-line, taking away the danger of hitting my head on his head – something that I have done twice and do not wish to do again.

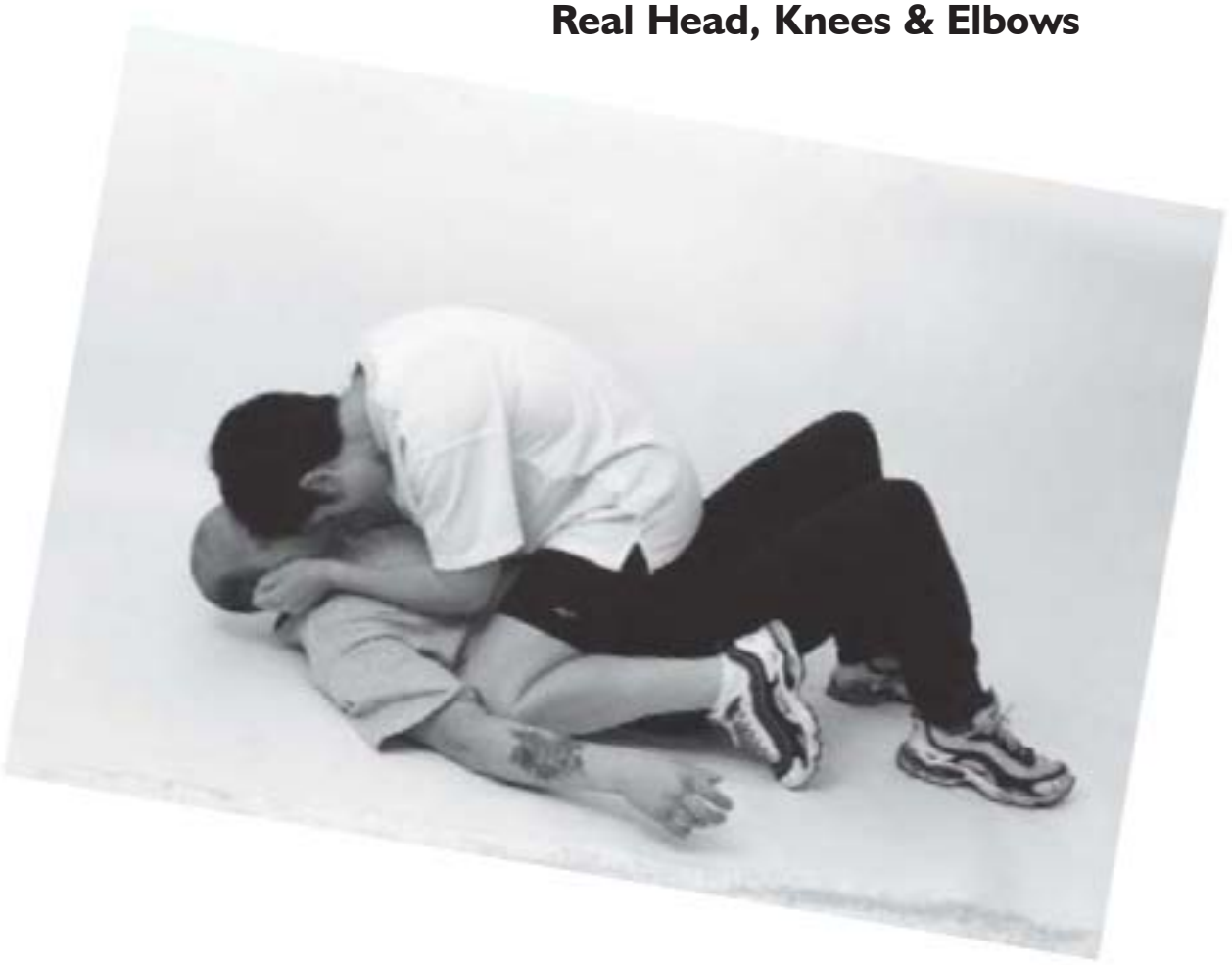
For the record I have seen many demonstrations, via book and video where one person attacks the other by butting him in the forehead. Please don't ever do this. In theory it should work, in practice is certainly does not. You are as likely to knock yourself out as you are your attacker. Listen to a man that has done it for real, the right way and the wrong way.
The head is also very effective on the floor, for example, when you are ground fighting with an opponent. Especially from what is commonly called the 'mount position'.

Head butting from the mount:

When I attack from here it is usually multiple attacks, my intention being to knock the opponent out or force him over onto his belly so that I can choke him out. Please follow the illustrations below for a better look at how it works.

Real Head, Knees & Elbows

To open the facial target up (the opponent will protect his face in this scenario at all costs), I will usually strike first with my fists. As soon as the opponent's guard is taken away I will drive forward with multiple butts until he is out or he turns to protect his face. If he turns I will wrap my right (or left) arm around his throat to secure the choke (or strangle).



Chapter Two

Knees

'Bob and his partner, a comedy duo, were playing the student gig at one of their regular venues. This was a part time thing for Bob, whose full time occupation was as a martial arts instructor, his main style being that of Muay Thai. The act was going down well and the crowd seemed to appreciate the raucous humour that the two attacked them with. Part of the act involved insulting, in the best possible taste of course, members of the audience. It was never taken badly (not until tonight least ways), and was usually accepted in the vein that it was delivered. Occasionally a heckler, a would-be stand up, would aim the odd verbal missile only to be shot down in flames by these two brilliant professionals.

Bob had noticed the staring Neanderthal standing at the side of the stage attacking him and his partner with looks that could kill. He took no notice initially after all, the act was X-rated, and not everyone found it to their taste.

As the act went on, the stare from the side stage mammalian got stronger and he edged closer and closer to the stage. His arms were starting to splay, like he was carrying rolls of carpet under them and his eyes took on a stare that was conducive with an animal stalking its prey. Bob sensed that the guy was preparing to attack and so tried to catch the eye of one of the bouncers – none were within view. As he continued his act and simultaneously tried to catch the eye of a doorman the man with the stare suddenly exploded onto the stage and raced at him 'arms-a-flailing' like a man possessed. Instinctively Bob grabbed his attacker as he lurched forward and drove a Thai knee deep into his solar plexus – like only a Thai man can – and dropped his adversity like a sack of shit. The crowd gave a murmur of applause and a few giggled supposing that it was all a part of the show (it was that kind act!). A bouncer appeared from the door and dragged what was left of the guy out of the club and left him, still gasping for breath, in the cold night air.

Bob and his partner continued their act concluding with Bob chopping a melon in half, across an audience member's bared stomach, with a Samurai sword no less. I can only conclude by saying that I'm only glad that the fella didn't attack during this part of the act, otherwise there

would have been more than melon being severed on stage with a four foot sword.'

The knees of course, were made legendary by the great Muay Thai boxers, such as Master Sken, Master Toddy, Master Woody and the effervescent Sandy Holt. They use kneeing techniques as naturally and effectively as the western boxer uses his hands. I would say that 'the knees' are relegated to in-fighting or grappling range though irreplaceable when the range is right.

Again the specialist, some of those mentioned above as a for instance, will, can and do use the knees from all ranges inside and outside of grappling range, and to great effect. But they are masters of the knee and elbow and so are exceptions to the rule. If you wish to specialise in any given technique you too can break the rules.

The knees may be used effectively to attack upward, forward, roundways, inwards, jumping or, to a felled opponent, as a finishing technique downward. Attacking as low as the opponent's knee or as high as his head. The attacks are very accessible, very basic and in some case demand only a low skill factor. This is very important if it is going to work for a person, a recreational

player, that does not want to dedicate his whole life to training.

Upward Knee

This is the basic upward knee technique that you see on all self-defence programmes where the women teacher says, like she's talking about a recipe or something, 'just knee him in the testicles for the desired results.' That's not to say of course that this is not an effective technique, it really is. However, no attack, not even with a gun, holds a guarantee to drop the opponent dead.

As stated the problem with kneeing techniques is that you generally have to be close to an opponent. This means close enough for him to grab you and drag you to the floor – not the best place to be in a violent encounter, especially when facing multiple opponents or indeed one determined opponent that wants you on the floor in the first place. I get sick of seeing kneeing techniques as the flag-ship of so many hypothetical self-defence productions which intimate that this technique will guarantee to finish an encounter should it be employed – not so. No technique holds such a guarantee, and to believe that they do, is to ill prepare yourself for an arena that is ferocious and ugly.

My first couple of attempts at kneeing techniques, in real encounters failed abysmally because my attacks were clumsy and pushy. This was not helped by the fact that I was wearing trousers that stuck to my thighs as I tried to lift my knee. In theory and in perfect conditions it should be easy to generate power with the knee, in reality with adrenal shake in the legs and constrictive clothing it is far from easy. For a knee attack to work it needs to be sharp and explosive, this means much practice. A slow technique not only lacks power, it is also easy for an aggressor to catch. If he grabs your leg you are as good as on the ground and if that's where he wanted you in the first place then you are in a world of trouble, as they say. I'll talk in a moment about the different attacks you can employ with the knee.

The knee attack is best aimed at the groin or testicles, or if for some reason the opponent is bent over, the face. You could pull the opponent over so that the face is more accessible, but from my experience, opponents don't just let you 'pull them over' and will resist like their very life depends upon it (it may well do). So rather aim for targets that are readily available.

Lift the knee upward as sharply as possible. A slow pushy movement would probably be

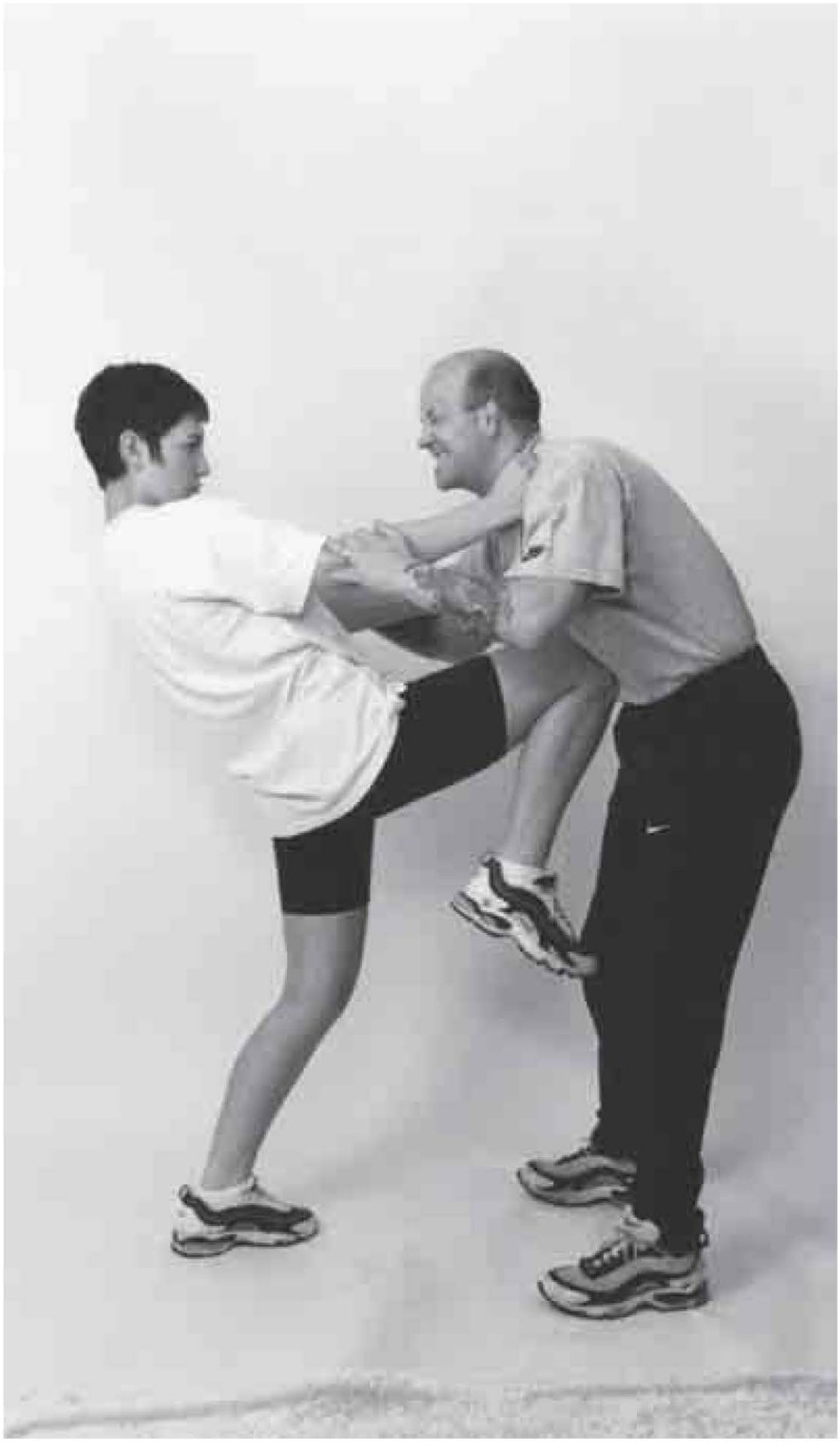
ineffective, the quicker the ascent, the greater the impact. If applying the same technique to the opponent's head or face, first grab his head by the hair or ears or by coupling your hands up at the back of his head and pull his head down rapidly as you thrust your knee into his face. As they meet smash your knee through his face.

As I said earlier, if you have the choice better to go for the lower extremities than try to knee him in the head by dragging his head to your knee. His wedding tackle is already there waiting to be attacked so why travel anywhere else when it is not necessary. If however you attempt to attack the groin and he bends over to thwart your strike, then he has presented his head for attack, on the platter as it were. Go with the energy, take what he gives you.

Forward Knee:

I must admit that this is my most favoured kneeing technique, though the skill factor is higher due to the fact that you have to incorporate more hip extension. But the results are worth the training. If you connect properly with this technique it is devastating and effective.

This technique is much the same as the thrusting front kick using the knee as the attacking tool as opposed to the foot. It relies heavily on the grip you have on the opponent, though I have to repeat, the better Thai fighters will successfully employ all these techniques with or without the leverage of an opponent's clothing. Grab the opponent's attire tightly at about shoulder level and vigorously push him away from you, this will force him into an equal and opposite reaction, that is he will push back, as he does steal the energy that he gives you and pull viciously. Simultaneously, thrust the attacking knee upward and forward to meet the opponent's body on its descent. At the moment of impact thrust both hips forward and into the opponent's body whilst still pulling downward with the grip. This is probably the best one, but the hardest to perfect because you need to perfect so many elements, not least the flow, going with the opponent's energy.

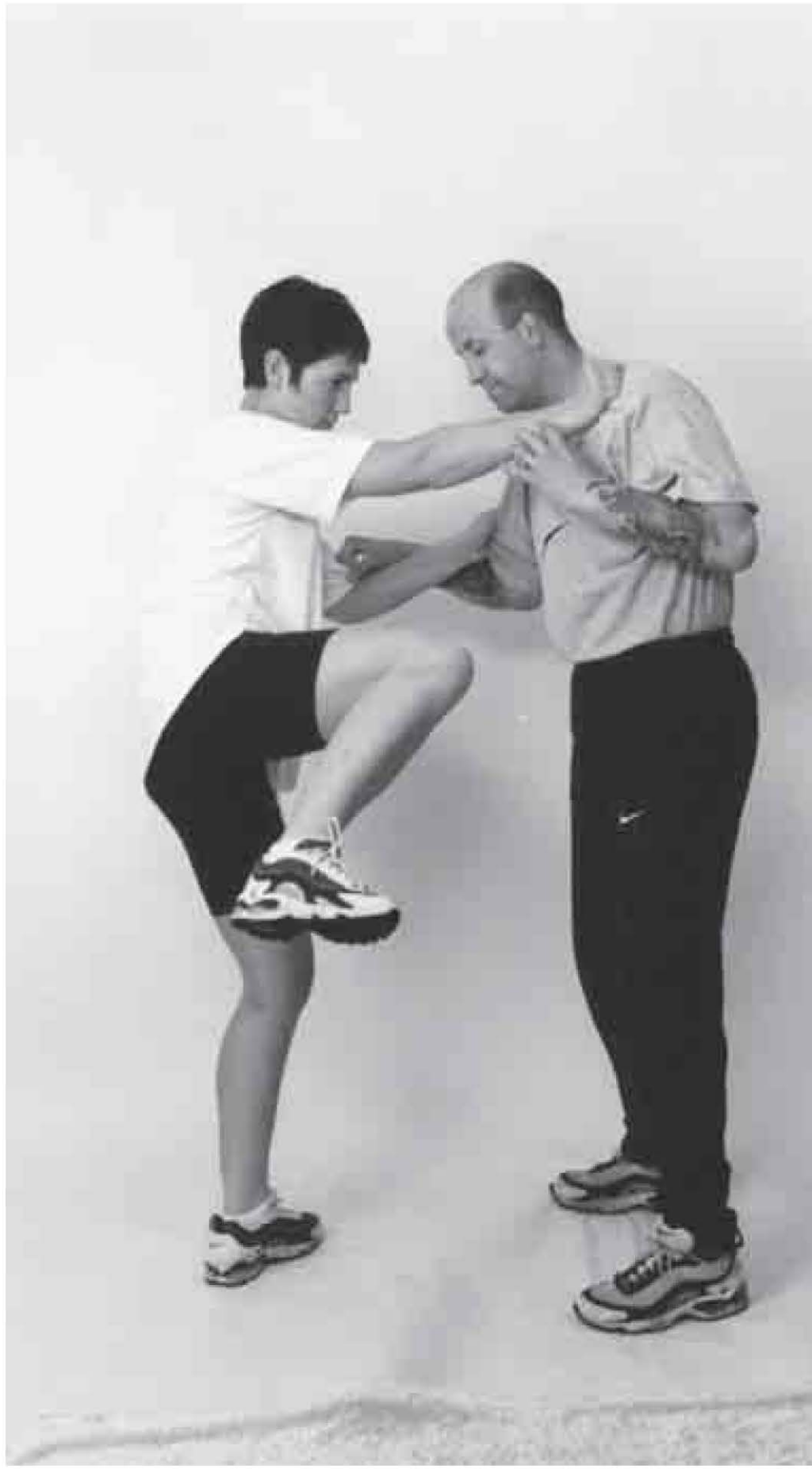


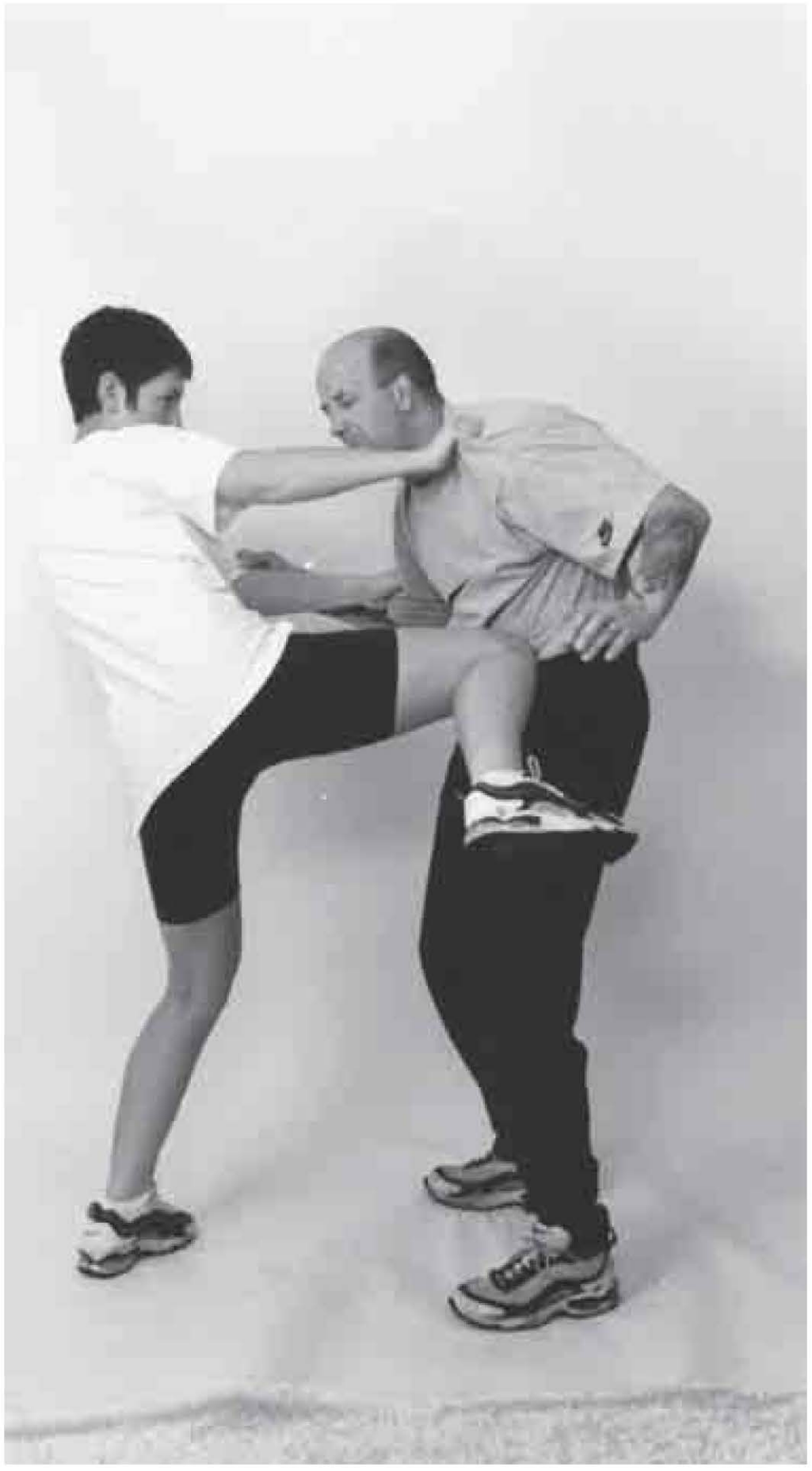
Roundhouse knee:

I like the roundhouse knee, though I have to say that it is not, in my opinion, a stopping technique. It is good though to create openings and at the very least weaken an opponent. The skill factor here is high again, so vigilant practice is needed.

The roundhouse knee is much the same as the roundhouse kick, using the knee as the attacking tool as opposed to the foot. It, also, is relegated to grappling distance and relies much on the pulling/grabbing support of an opponent's clothing. Maybe used very effectively to attack the opponent's knee or thigh. Sometimes you can attack the body but there is a danger of the leg getting caught mid strike and you being forced over. Advanced fighters do this technique to the head of an opponent, literally turning it into a flying knee attack. I wouldn't recommend this unless you are highly skilled.

To the knee, thigh or body lift the attacking knee up and slightly away from your body then thrust it downward toward the target and at the same time pulling the opponent via his attire toward the attacking knee. On impact thrust your hips forward and slightly drop your body weight into the technique.

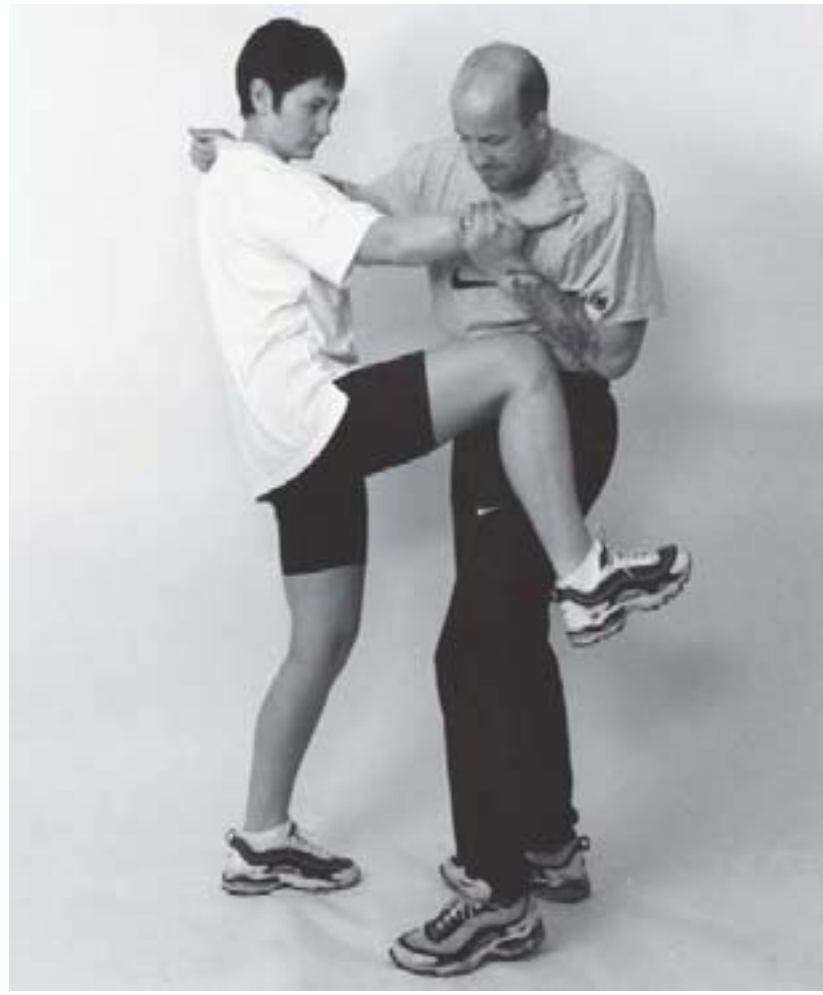




Inward Knee attack:

I have listed this technique here though, I have to say that I don't find it that effective. I think it can help to wear an opponent down in a contest but that is hardly what we are looking at here. Even the better fighters haven't inspired me with this technique, though I am sure that there are those out there that can make it work. Me, I find that the energy used in employing it far out ways any result you get from the attack.

Pick the knee off the floor and, using the inside of the knee, attack the opponent's thigh or side, as per illustration.



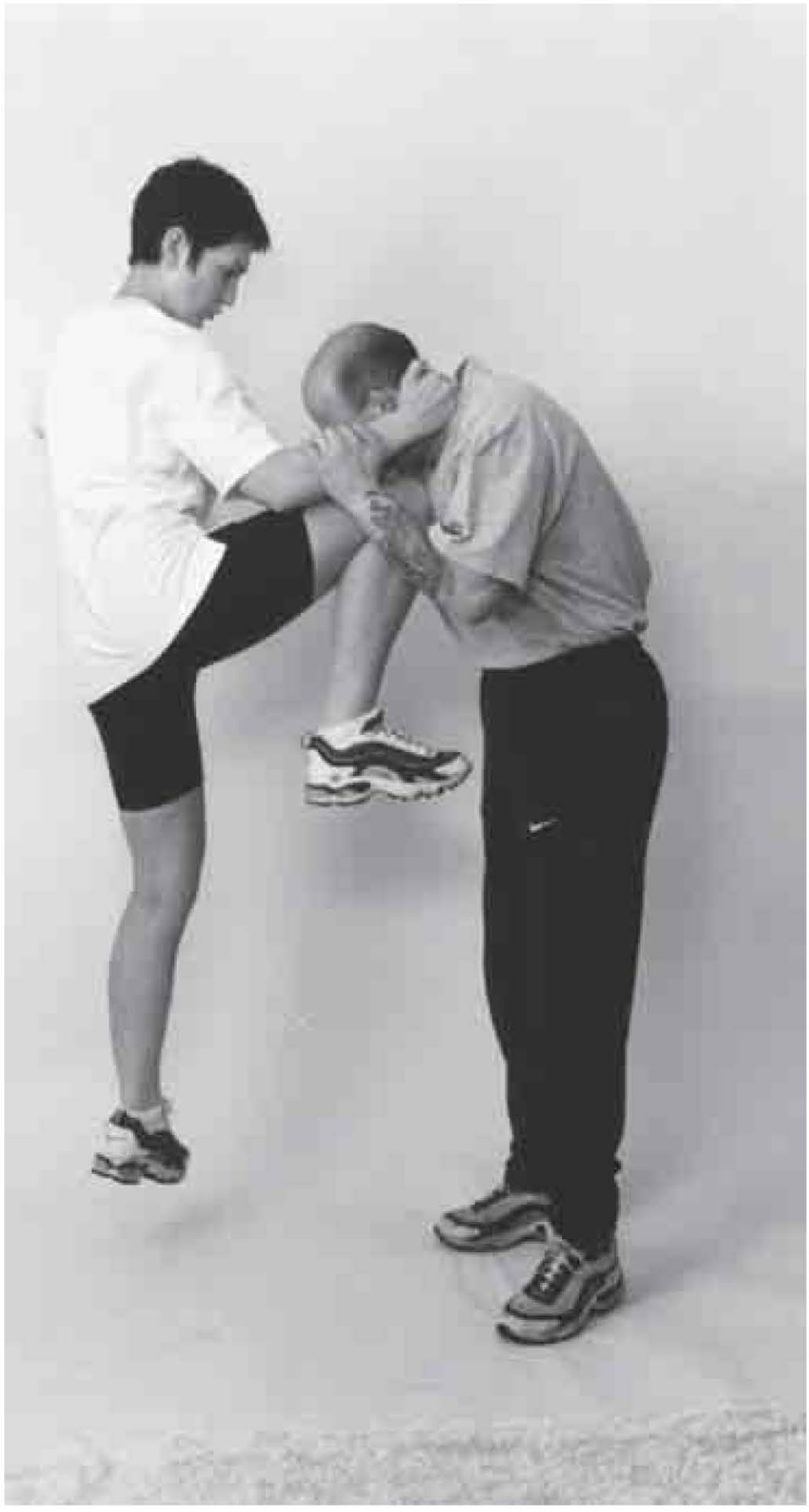
Jumping front Knee:

This is one of those techniques that looks over-flashy and benign, until you try it on someone, then it turns into a bone smashing technique that stops opponents like an axe across the knee. When I first started practising this move, hitting the pads etc. I felt that the effort to jump and knee was not worth the little power you seemed to deliver on the other end. I didn't realise at the time that the pads were not the right equipment to practice this attack on, in fact I couldn't find anything, other than a partner in training, to practice on that allowed me to see, more specifically feel, the potential of this technique. It's similar in this respect to a head butt. If you demonstrate a head butt on the bag or pad or strike shield it looks and feels weak and pushy, and yet when you apply the same technique to an opponent it is devastating. My first realisation of this, with the jumping knee, was when I tried it out in full contact sparring. The first person I tried it on dropped like a sack of shit with his face a mass of blood, I hadn't even put it in that hard, just the momentum and the impact of bone on face was enough to do the damage. Subsequently everyone that I practised my new-found technique on ended up on the bench nursing a sore and bleeding head. Note: I think that I need to say at this point that the people I train with are all hardened fighters

and all our training is to knock out or submission, I would hate anyone to think that I would take advantage of lesser fighters to perfect my technique. I always took it as well as I gave it.

Back to the technique. As I said the likes of Master Sken do use this technique without the aid of grappling leverage, this is a very advanced and athletic endeavour. Personally I use it inside vertical grappling and always use the opponent as leverage for my strike, as you will see clearly by the illustrations.

When the distance falls from kicking/punching to vertical grappling I always try and secure a grip around the back of the opponent's neck with my right or left hand, preferably right. I pull his head slightly forward so that his face is to the floor. From here I literally hop off my left leg and drive my right knee into the opponent's face, once or multiple attacks if they are offered. Simultaneously I pull his head into my knee to add force to the strike.



Knee drop:

This is a Garry Spiers speciality, and he does it like no one else. It is a hugely damaging technique that is used to finish off an opponent who is already lying of the floor. Logically, the heavier you are the more effective this technique will be, although it doesn't rely entirely on body weight for its effectiveness. But beware, it can be dangerous for the person attempting the knee drop, due to the danger of him/her being pulled into grappling range by the person on the floor if the technique does not do its job.

Literally, you drop all of your weight forward and down onto the opponent, landing on the target area; ribs, head, etc, with the point of your attacking knee, (left or right). The quicker the descent, the more effective the technique. For added effect you may jump up so that you are landing on the opponent from a greater height.

The danger here is obvious. If the opponent is not finished by your attack he will probably grab you as you drop and you could easily fall in to ground fighting and be beaten by a stronger more experienced person. As a point of fact I do not generally recommend the use of finishing techniques in self-defence, unless the assailant is still a danger to you. Always try to hit and run.

Not forgetting though that self-defence and fighting are different and the rules alter according to which arena you enter, or are training for. With self-defence I recommend, on the physical plain, hit and run – no more, no less. In street fighting you would not hit and run, rather you would take the fight to a conclusion, you finish him or he finishes you. If you were working as a doorman the rules are slightly different again, and far too complicated to go into in this text (read *Watch My Back*, *Bouncer* or *On The Door* for more on this).

It is popular, I know, for self-defence teachers to recommend a second and third strike to an attacker who is already stunned. Forget it. Don't even think about it. Anyone that has actually been involved in a real situation would not, or certainly should not, recommend this. If one attack stuns an assailant then use the two or three seconds that this creates to make good your escape. Unless you are highly skilled a stunned, even a semi-conscious assailant will instinctively grab you when you move in for the kill. Then you could have real problems: your attacker is not only hurt, he is pissed off too. I know of many people in self-defence situations who have been beaten to a pulp because they have gone for the *coup de grace* and been grabbed when they should have been a hundred yards away and to safety.

The best way to practice knee attacks (although, as I stated the equipment does not always give you an accurate reading of an attack's potential) is on a punch bag. For best effect clothe it, either by tying a loose sack around it or dressing it in old clothes, so that you can grip it like you would a real opponent. Then grab and knee as you would a real person. You may also, if you wish, swing the bag and knee it as it swings toward you. If you lie the bag down on the floor you can practice the knee drop on it. A 6foot bag is great for practising lower region strikes.

You can also use the focus pads, but they are not as effective as the bag. The uke (partner) holds one pad tightly against his thigh with the target area pointing outward whilst at the same time thrusting his knee, (roundhouse), into the pad. To practice the upward knee, the holder should put both hands, (padded) in front of himself at about groin height, right hand overlapping left with both palms facing toward the floor. The attacker may grip the pad holder's hands and pull them downward into the uprising knee or alternatively, grab his attire at shoulder level and pull on them as he executes the knee attack on the pads.

The best way to develop the kneeing techniques is with a partner. If you are looking for a system

that use the knee to great effect, or the elbow for that matter, then you need go no further than Thai boxing. In my opinion, they're the real masters when it comes to these deadly attacking tools.

Chapter Three

Elbows

Mick was getting tired. It was 1.30 am, near the end of his shift as a doorman in probably the biggest, busiest nightclub in the centre of town. He had already done a full days work on the sites as a hod carrier. At this moment in time all he could think about was crawling into bed and wrapping his arms around the warm silky body of his lady. Everyone was always telling him what a great job he had, 'an easy number'.

At this moment in time he would rather have been anywhere in the world. Anywhere other than this shit hole where the cigarette smoke attacked his lungs, the music attacked his ears and the woman in front of him, the ugliest thing he had ever seen with only one head, was trying to scratch his eyes out. He kept his fence in front of his face, to parry her hands as they reached for his eyes, and tried unsuccessfully to stop the embarrassed giggle that kept coming from his mouth.

Real Head, Knees & Elbows

The woman was a menace. She'd been caught smoking a joint in the club, against the rules of this establishment, and he had asked he to leave. She had seemed OK at first but now, in the foyer of the club, she had suddenly decided that she was not going to go, not under any circumstances. Mick was left with the unwelcome task of either talking her out or, should the worse come to the worse dragging her out by the panty hose. So undignified, so unnecessary but, the way she was working her mouth and exercising her claws so inevitable.

'Look you bag of sick,' Mick had a nice way with the women, 'you either leave of your own accord or I'll have to physically drag you out. 'S your choice!'

'You touch me and my boyfriend's gonna spark you,' she spat back vehemently.

Mick sighed, the kind that he had sighed so very often when women had threatened him with their men. He knew that this probably meant some poor bloke was going to get a slap trying to prove his manhood.

'I'll give you one more chance to leave. If you don't walk out I'll throw you out.'

The woman dropped her eyebrows and scrunched up her face defiantly. She folded her arms demonstrating that she was not going to be moved. Mick spoke no more and grabbed her and started moving her to the door. From out of nowhere a hunter-gatherer came hurtling towards Mick with a Pils bottle in his hand and bad intention on his mind. It was the boyfriend.

'YAAAAA! Get your ****ing hands of my woman you bast...'

BANG!!

A split second before the bottle landed on Mick's head he released the girl and reverse elbowed the boyfriend straight across the front of his face. It exploded on impact and everyone in the small foyer, including the pot-smoking girlfriend let out a pained 'Ohhhh!' in unison as the bottle wielding mammalian fell to the floor like a dead thing. The girl shut her mouth for the first time all night and looked gobsmacked by the felling of her saviour. Mick also looked down at the sleeping man and thought, not for the first time this week, or this night for that matter, 'so undignified, so unnecessary and yet so inevitable.'

When the time and the distancing are right the elbows can be almost as versatile as the hands,

though employed, usually from a shorter range. Many of the trained fighters that I know see the elbows as being *the* main artillery in a real fight, because of the awesome power they can bring to a fight on the punch bag. However, for those that do not know it, the punch bag is a far cry from the street, and whilst it can prepare a fighter for some of the physical elements of a live encounter it in itself is not a 'live' situation. As I said before about the knee and head techniques, you may use them on the pads and feel, because the power does not transmit on that particular piece of equipment, that they are worthless for a real fight. As we have already established this is not the case. The equal and opposite of this is also true, when a technique is awesome on a piece of training equipment, the elbows for instance, the trainee automatically feels that it will be exactly the same outside. From my experience it is not.

A lot of my Thai fighter friends will say to me, 'Oh yeah, but we've got our elbows!' As though being able to elbow correctly is going to turn everything around. Well it won't, let me tell you. And it is not because I don't rate elbow techniques, I do, nor because I don't rate Thai, I do – very highly – I'm an instructor in Thai myself. What I've learned and what I know from being involved in thousands of live fighting

scenarios is this: elbowing range, the range between punching and vertical grappling, disappears almost as quickly as it appears. That's the nature of a real fight. So although elbowing techniques are awesome in power and speed, the range that you need to fire them is almost non existent.

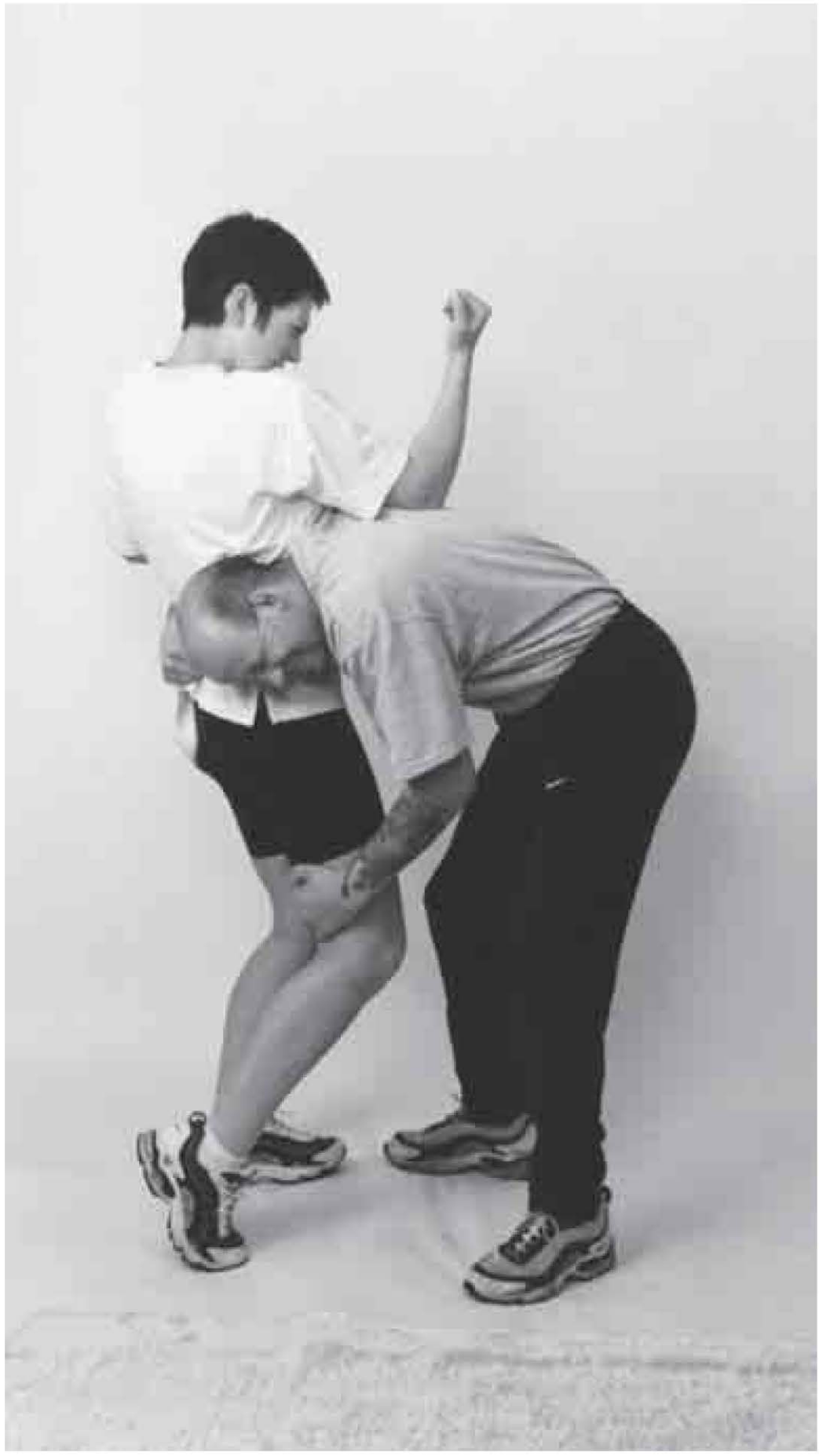
I know that there are people out there now who have probably used elbows to effect, I have, some of my friends have, but only when the range was spontaneously right for the technique. The rest of the time you are either punching or grappling. Watch a Thai boxing match and see how many times they elbow through out the fight – very few. That's because the range is a fleeting one that disappears like mist in the middle of a fighting scenario. And the Thais are the masters of this technique.

When the range and the energy are right though, the elbows are awesome. That's why they are included in this text (and also because a book called *Real Head, Knees and Elbows* would look pretty odd without any elbow techniques). So my advice is learn these techniques, develop them even master them, but don't expect too much from them because the range of a real fight rarely favours the elbows. Due to the close proximity of the elbow to the body they are,

potentially, more powerful than the hands, however, they lack the 'feel', accuracy and cunning of the hands.

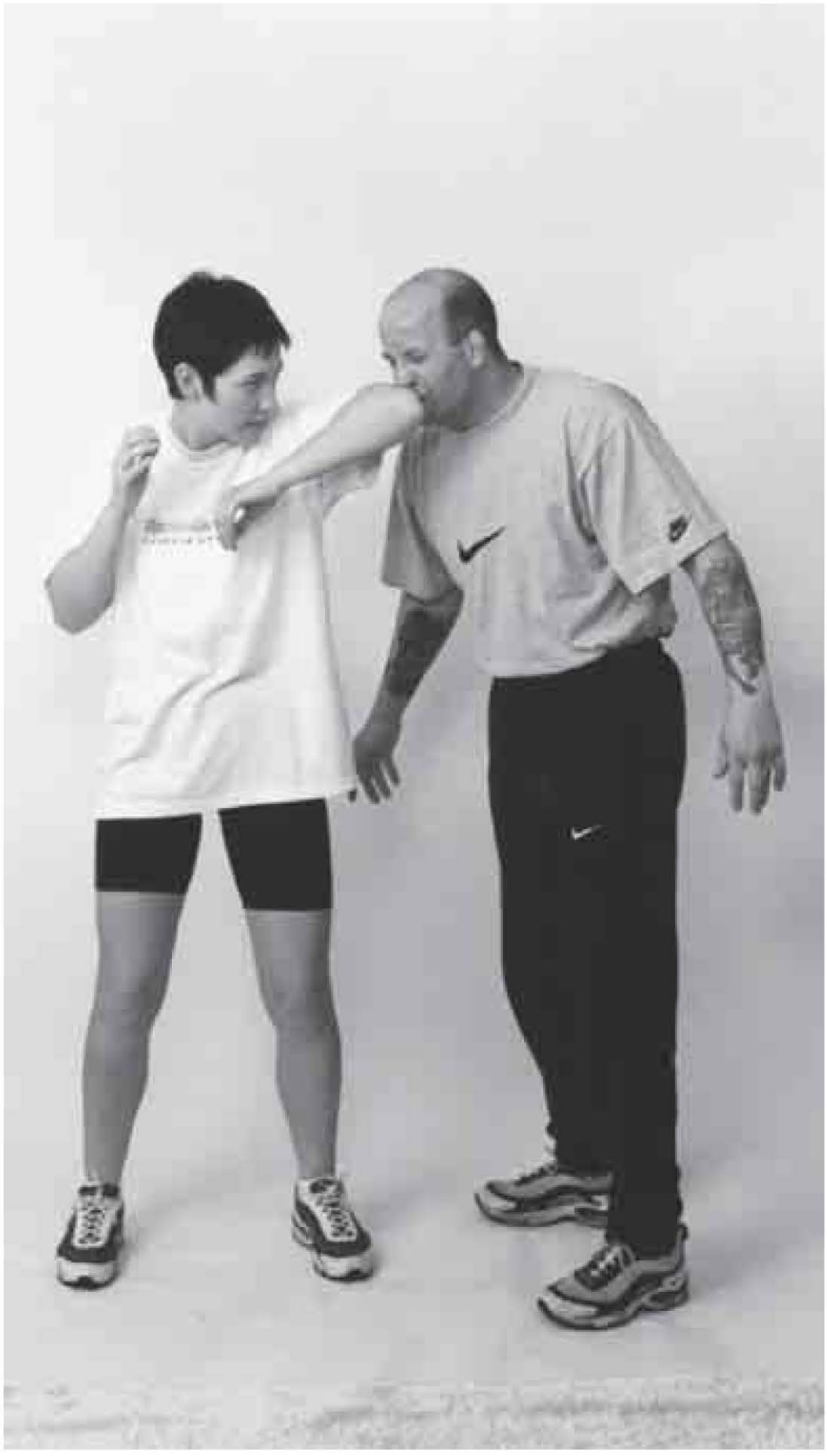
Downward strike (against a waist or leg grab):

Lift your right (or left) arm up high with the palm of your hand facing away from you. Pull it down in a rapid descent aiming the point of the elbow at and into the target, (spine, neck, rib cage).



Side thrust (against an assailant attacking from the side):

Bring your right (or left) arm across the front of your chest, palm inwards, as far as it will go, then thrust back along the same route, aiming the point of the elbow into the oncoming or stationary attacker. Target the Solar Plexus, throat or face.



Reverse elbow:

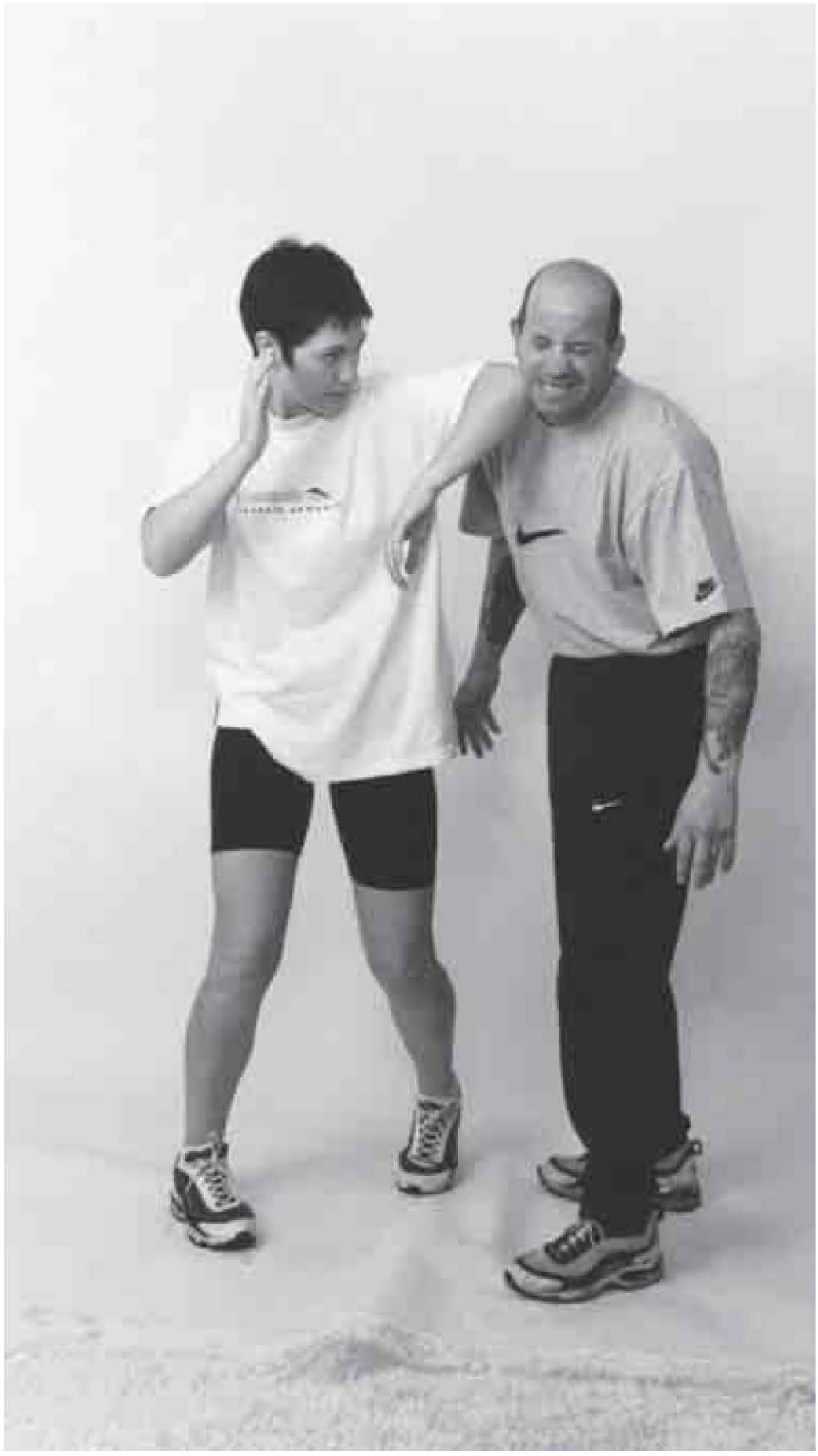
Stretch your right arm out in front of you. Turn you head and look at the target behind. Sharply retract your arm back from its out-stretched position and behind you, aiming the point of your elbow at and into the assailant, simultaneously, step back with your right leg to add weight to the attack. Target the solar plexus, throat or face.

Uppercut:

The uppercut is not unlike the uppercut punch, employing the point of the elbow as opposed to the fist. It is important here to turn the body, as per illustration, into the technique. This can be used off the front or rear leg with the left or right hand, according to how you are in proximity to the target. Thrust the elbow directly upward, into and through the target. I always place the palm of the striking hand over my ear to ensure the correct technique. The uppercut, as with all elbow techniques should be flowing and relaxed as opposed to stopping at the end of the strike with rigid kime (body focus).

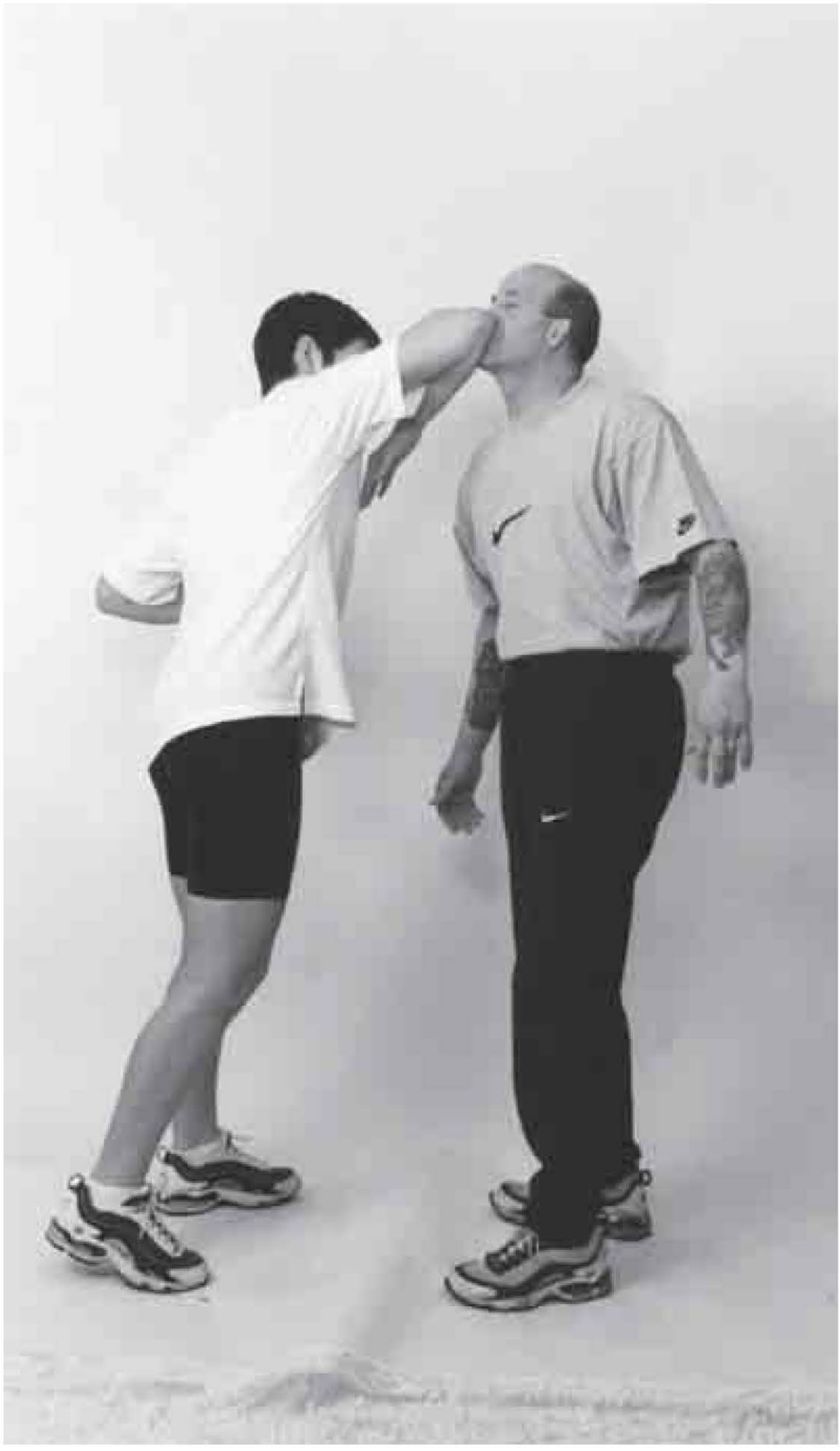
Roundhouse:

The roundhouse elbow is a lovely flowing technique from very close range. Executed in the same manner as a hook punch, using the point of the elbow as opposed to the fist to strike. Again, keep it loose and flowing, a relaxed technique it the most powerful technique. Thrown off the front or rear leg with either the right or the left hand. Throw the elbow in a circular manner (like a hook punch) directly to the target, the hand tucks in by your own chest. Be sure to drive the body weight behind the technique.



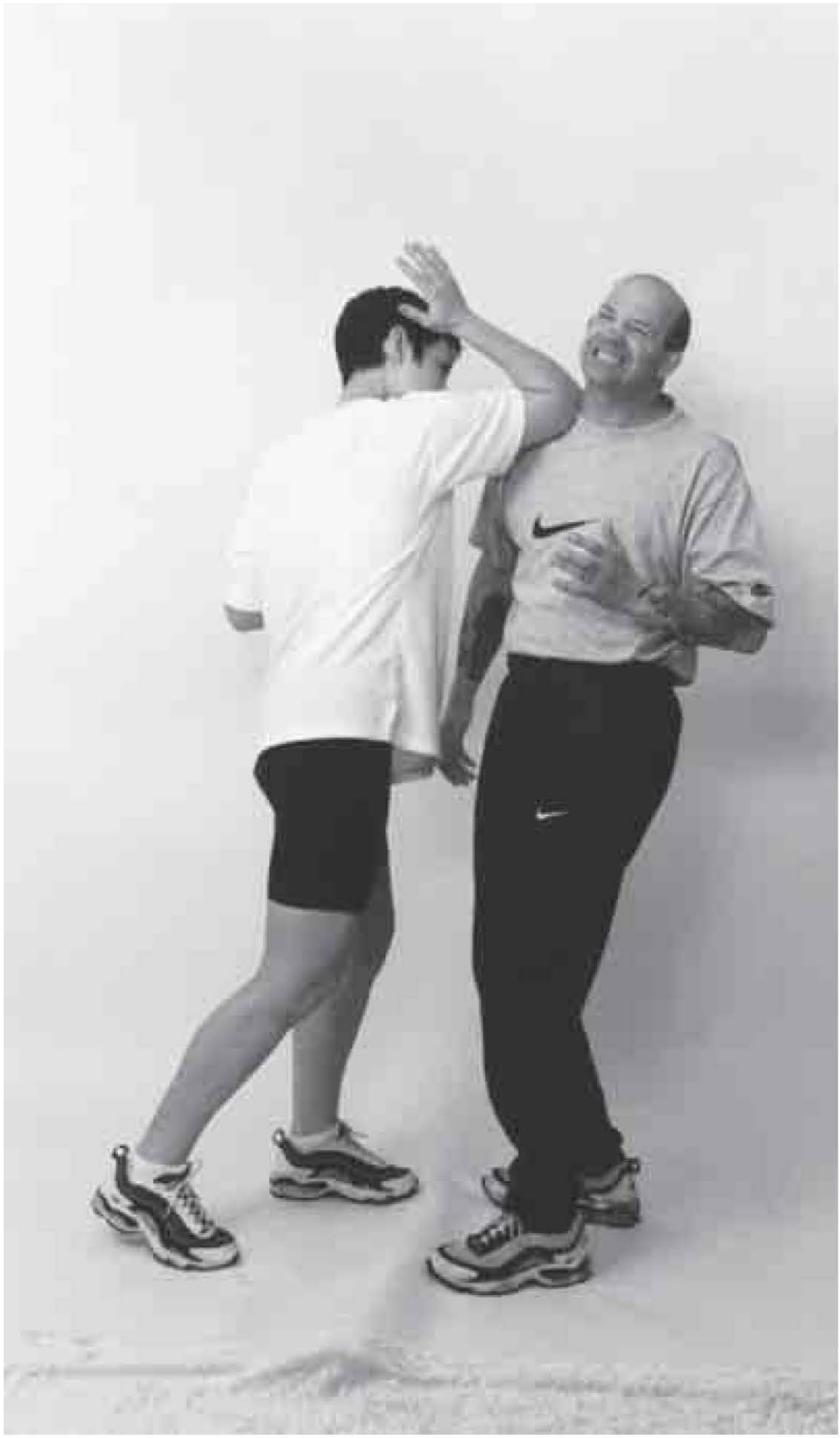
Overhand:

The overhand is really just the same as the roundhouse, only with a higher angle. This is especially useful if your opponent has a guard, you use the overhand to attack the target over the guard. The mechanics are exactly the same as the roundhouse, just a little higher with a chopping action, as per illustration, at the end of the movement.



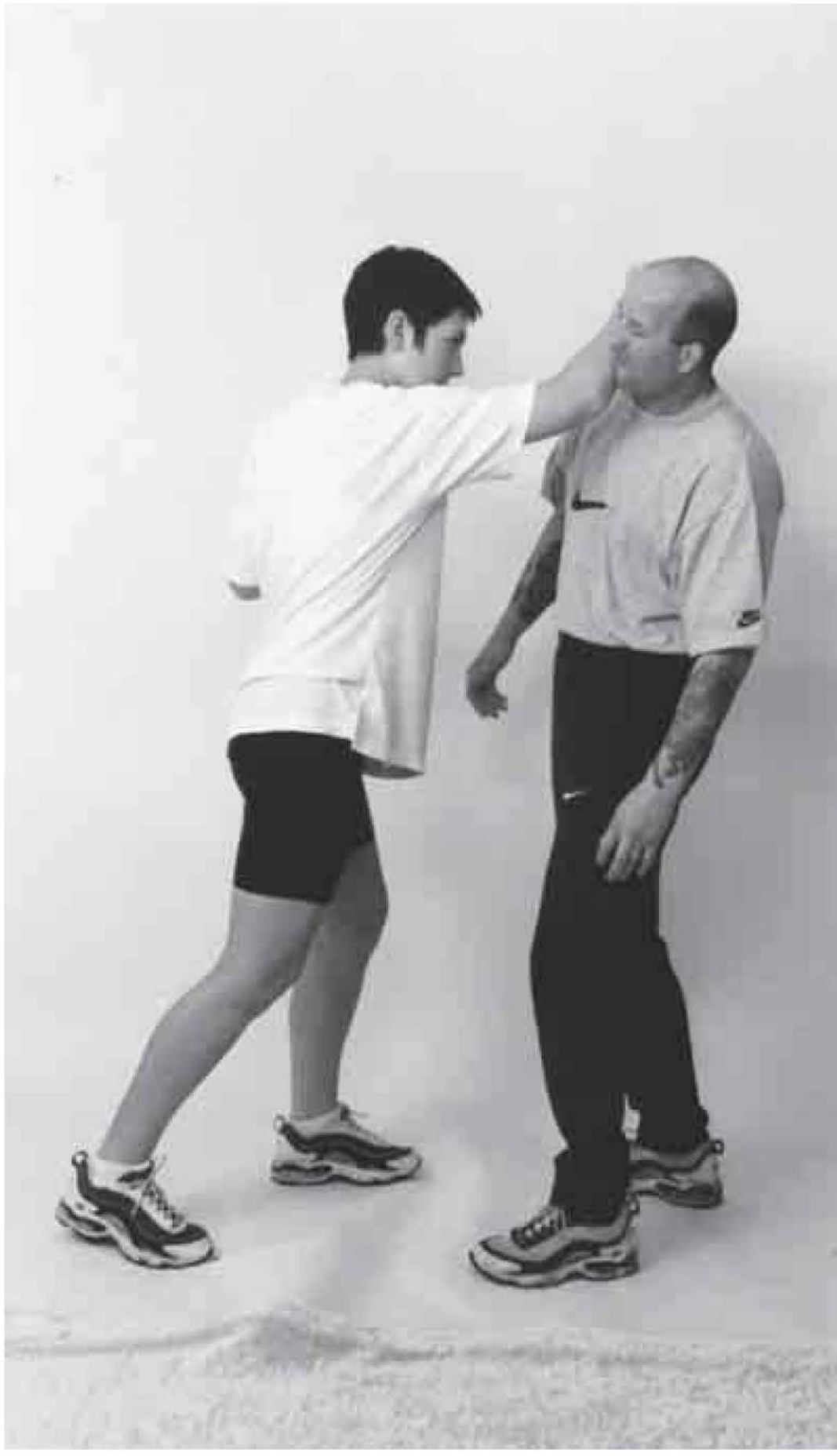
Hacking:

The hacking elbow is specifically designed to attack the collar-bone of an opponent. Or you can aim the same technique at the face and drag it over the eyes, nose and mouth on point of impact. Bring the elbow up high above the head in a semi-circular action, as per illustration, and strike down directly at the face or collar-bone. This technique tends to come into its own if you add a jump to the beginning. As you jump use the same 'elbow above the head' action and drive down onto the target as your body weight comes back to the floor. This adds tremendous momentum to the technique. If you have an opponent on the ground you can also use the hacking elbow as a finishing strike.



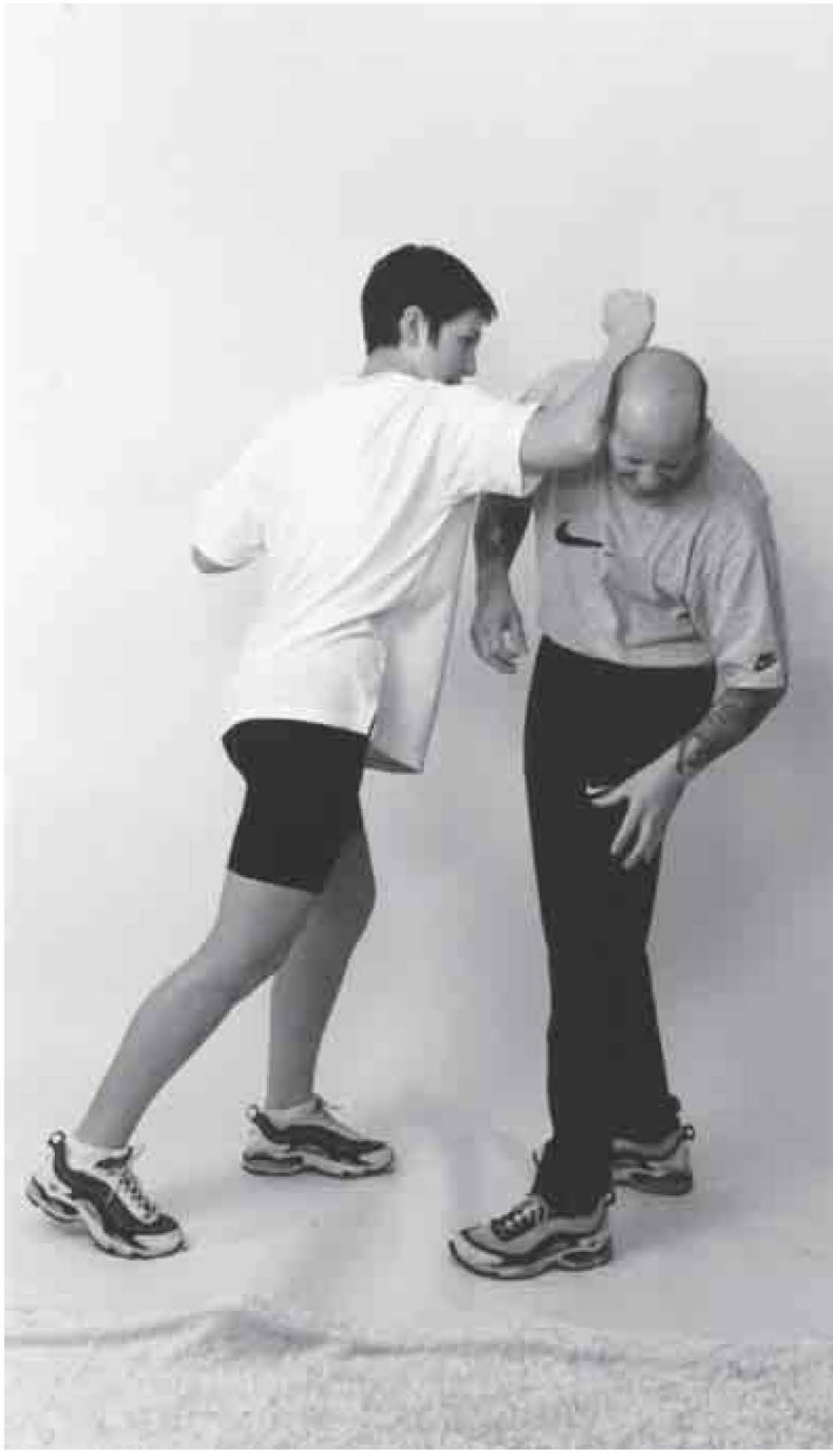
Punching elbow:

This is a sneaky little trick, used by many of the latter day punchers who liked to add a bit of illegality to their play, and whack an opponent with the un-gloved elbow. Usually thrown off the back leg-right or left cross-but could equally be used of the front leg too. We will use the right cross as an example: throw the right cross to the opponent's head but deliberately miss and pass the side of his face, smashing him with your elbow on route, as per illustration.



Retraction:

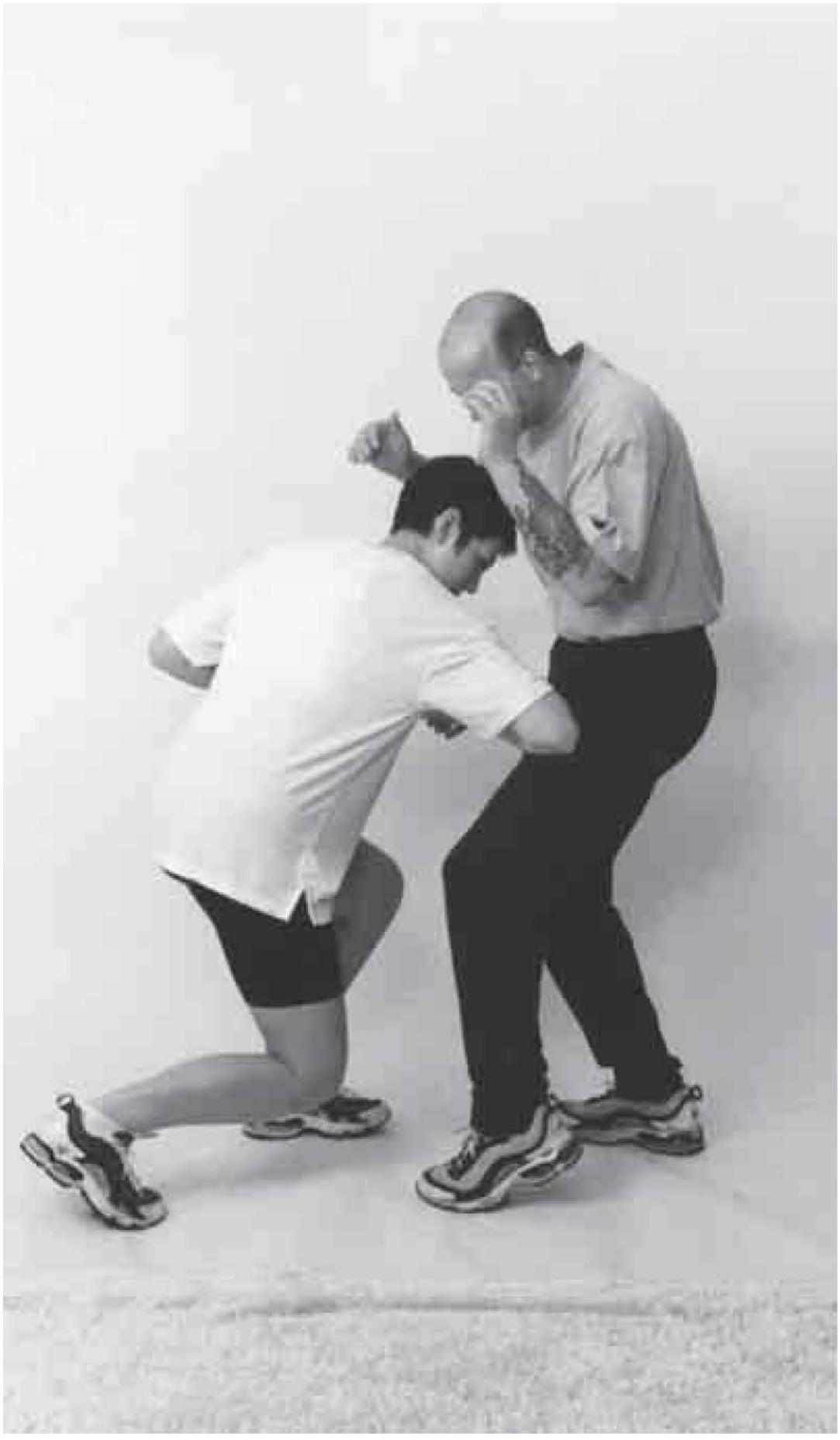
The retracting elbow strike is another old boxer's favourite used as a professional foul in the boxing ring. After throwing a punch that misses and goes past the head (either accidentally or deliberately to set this technique up) strike the opponent's head/ear/face with the elbow of the same arm as you retract the punch.



Drop elbow:

This is a devastating technique that destroys an opponent from the legs up. It is very similar in context to the Thai leg kick, only you are using the point of the elbow as opposed to the shin to attack. This can be used as a professional foul if you are boxing (many of the boxers choose to use the fist here as opposed to the elbow but either will suffice) or in vertical grappling range. It is a weakening technique as oppose to a finishing technique, though if delivered correctly it can also be a good finisher. What I have found though is this: even if the technique does not finish the opponent it will surely take him one step closer to the point of capitulation. There is nothing like a crack across the thigh to take the fight out of an opponent.

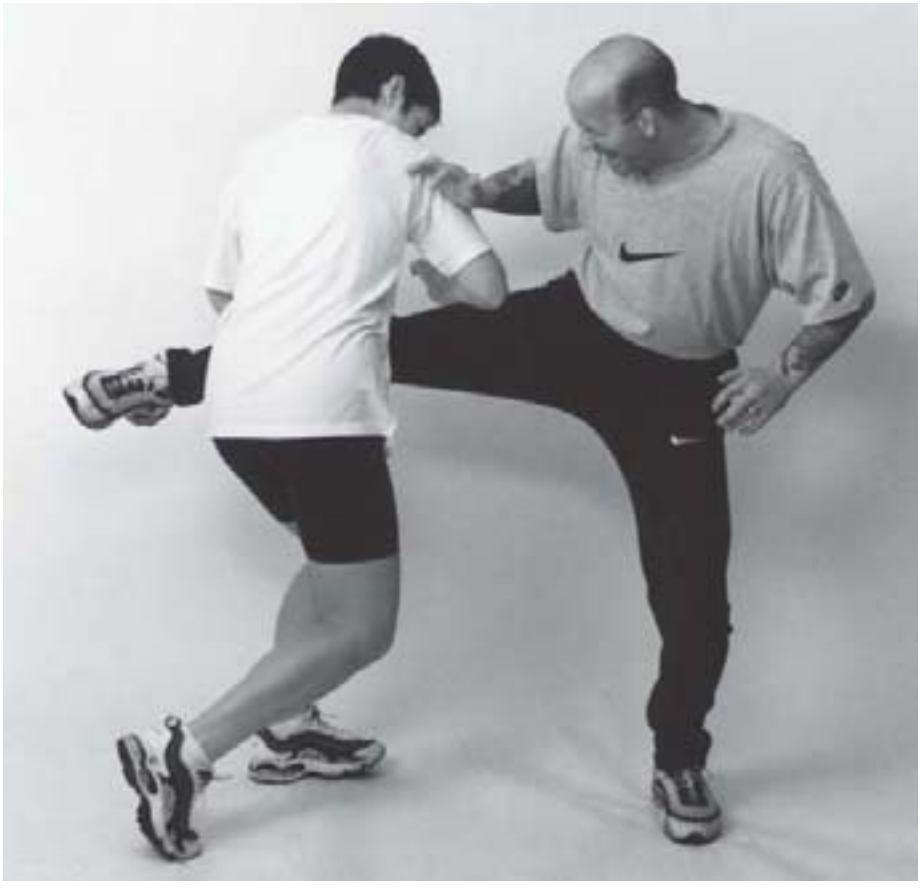
This is only really effective when you are close to an opponent. Drop your stance very low, as per illustration, and drive your reverse elbow-left or right depending upon which leg you lead with-into the thigh of the opponent. Try to strike with the point of the elbow. As soon as the blow has landed, return to the standing position. You could easily combine this with kneeing techniques to the thigh to take the fight out of the opponent.



Leg grab elbow:

This is a technique that I always favoured, especially in heavy sparring and especially when I was facing a hard opponent who needed slowing down a little. It can be used from a leg catch-when you catch the kick of an opponent –or from a leg pick up – when, in vertical grappling you pick up the opponent's leg.

Once you have the leg tucked under you arm, as per illustration, smash your elbow into the thigh of the opponent, as many times as you need to ensure the right result. This can be followed by a throw, a take down or a punch – whatever presents itself to you at the time.



Angular elbows:

Angular elbows, the same as angular punches, are strikes that do not fit into the category of straight, uppercut, roundhouse strike, overhand, hacking etc. For instance you may throw an attack, to fit a specific opening in the opponent's artillery, where a conventional strike will not fit. This attack may be a cross between an uppercut and a roundhouse, or a cross between a roundhouse and overhand etc. By working this way one has an infinite number of possible strikes to choose from and no guard is without penetration. As an advance player you will probably find yourself naturally and instinctively throwing angular blows when a situation demands, whether they be with the hands, feet, elbows or whatever. It is the natural way of things to tailor all you basic and finite techniques into an ever-changing infinite artillery of combat techniques.

Conclusion

That concludes the head, knees and elbows. It also concludes the *Real Series* of books. I hope that *Real Head, Knees and Elbows* and the other texts have been of help to you the reader. Thank you very much for taking the time and the energy to read them.

I would like to say in conclusion that, although this book is predominantly about the physical aspect of self-protection – head, knees and elbows being a small part of the whole – it is not where I personally see self-protection. The physical response has to be the last resort, the ace card to pull when all else has failed. Try to avoid situation, escape them if this is not an option, use verbal dissuasion if you are cornered, only attack if there is no other option. Violence is not the answer. That is my philosophy, I hope that you might follow it. The physical response, while sometimes unavoidable, is not the answer, only undertake it if you really have to. And if you really have to then do it right, there are no half measures. Thank you again. Be a good person and karma will be kind to you.

Love and respect. God bless.

Geoff Thompson 1998

REAL PUNCHING

GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

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About the Author:

Geoff Thompson has to be one of the most recognised and controversial martial arts writers and teachers of this century, with over 20 best-selling books and 20 instructional videos on the contemporary role of martial art to his name. His work is both innovative and thought-provoking. As an ambassador for the martial arts he has appeared on national and international television and radio – for several years as the *BBC Good Morning* self-defence expert – talking about and giving advice on self-protection and related subjects.

He has taught his unique method of self-protection to the police, the Royal Marine commandos, in local government, on Excel Bodyguard training camps and also on the professional circuit. Geoff's first book *Watch My Back – A Bouncer's Story* (released in the USA by Paladin Press) about his nine years working as a nightclub doorman is widely recognised as a cult book. His other books have also been highly successful. He has appeared in numerous publications including: *SG's Martial Arts*, *Combat*, *Traditional Karate*, *Fighters*, *Terry O'Neill's Fighting Arts International*, *Muscle Mag* (Britain – USA), *Black Belt Magazine* (USA) *Fighters* (Sweden) and *Australasian Fighting Arts* (Australia). He is currently Sub-Editor of *Martial Arts Illustrated*. He has also featured in mainstream glossy magazines such as *Loaded*, *Maxim* and *Esquire* and has published several articles with *GQ* Magazine (Britain – Paris).

Geoff has to be one of the most practised instructors of our day with a long list of combat qualifications. He is presently a Sambo Russian Wrestling coach (Moscow Sambo Federation), Olympic Greco Roman Wrestling Coach (FILA), Olympic Free Style Level 3 Wrestling Coach (FILA) Ju-Jitsu coach, British Combat Association Coach, EKGB (Karate) 5th Dan, JKA (Japan Karate

Association) 2nd Dan, Shoalin Modga gung fu 1st Dan, BJA (British Judo Association) 1st Dan, ABA boxing coach and BTBC Muay Thai boxing coach. He is a former UK weapons champion and is trained in the use of the Defensive Flashlight and the PR24 Side Handled Baton. He has also trained in Aikido and weapons.

In 1997 Geoff was flown out to the United States by Chuck Norris and Richard Norton to teach his unique method of self-protection on their international martial arts seminar alongside martial art greats: Benny 'the jet' Urquediz and Rigan and Jean-Jacques Machado.

As well as his books and videos Geoff has written a feature film based on his life and 12 television plays based on his bouncer books. Although recognised as an international authority on the art of self-protection, his work in reality and cross training in combat is still thought of as heresy in some quarters of the martial arts world.

Other books and videos by Geoff Thompson:

Watch My Back – A Bouncer's Story
Bouncer (sequel to *Watch My Back*)
On the Door – *Further Bouncer Adventures*.
The Pavement Arena
– *Adapting Combat Martial Arts to the Street*
Real Self-defence
Real Head, Knees & Elbows
Real Grappling
Real Kicking
The Fence
The Art of Fighting Without Fighting
Dead Or Alive – *Self-protection*
3 Second Fighter – The Sniper Option
Weight Training – For the Martial Artist
Animal Day – Pressure Testing the Martial Arts
Tuxedo Warrior:
Tales of a Mancunian Bouncer, by Cliff Twemlow, foreword by Geoff Thompson
Small Wars - How To Live a Stress Free Life
Fear – The Friend of Exceptional People: techniques in controlling fear
Blue Blood on the Mat
by Athol Oakley, foreword by Geoff Thompson
Give Him To The Angels
– *The Story Of Harry Greb* by James R Fair
The Art of Fighting Without Fighting
– *Techniques in threat evasion*

The Ground Fighting Series (books):
Vol. One – Pins, the Bedrock
Vol. Two – Escapes
Vol. Three – Chokes and Strangles
Vol. Four – Arm Bars and Joint Locks
Vol. Five – Fighting From Your Back
Vol. Six – Fighting From Neutral Knees

Videos:
Lessons with Geoff Thompson
Animal Day – Pressure Testing the Martial Arts
Animal Day Part Two – The Fights
Three Second Fighter – The Sniper Option
Throws and Take-Downs Vols. 1-6
Real Punching Vols. 1-3
The Fence

The Ground Fighting Series (videos):
Vol. One – Pins, the Bedrock
Vol. Two – Escapes
Vol. Three – Chokes and Strangles
Vol. Four – Arm Bars and Joint Locks
Vol. Five – Fighting From Your Back
Vol. Six – Fighting From Neutral Knees

Advanced Ground Fighting Vols. 1-3
Pavement Arena Part 1
Pavement Arena Part 2 – The Protection Pyramid
Pavement Arena Part 3 – Grappling, The Last Resort
Pavement Arena Part 4 – Fit To Fight

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Prologue

A carpenter is knowledgeable about working with wood, a painter is knowledgeable about working with paint, and a pugilist who has mastered his craft should be knowledgeable about the mechanics of punching!

The importance of correct punching is that it is an art like any other art that must be practised to be perfected. It is about repetitive work, done over and over again with sound knowledge of the correct techniques.

'To kill a cockroach' is a term used in New York boxing gyms by coaches to fighters practising the execution of a pile driving left hook done to maximum effect with a swivel of the left foot/ankle as if you were crushing a cockroach with your foot, hence the catchphrase, transferring the body weight from left foot to right foot.

The fundamentals and techniques vary for the vast arsenal of different punches in a gladiator/pugilist's repertoire. To maximise all the varying punches the warrior must have the mentality and courage of his convictions to be whole-heartedly 100% committed to his cause, because in the words of Sugar Ray Leonard, top level fighting/combat is 80% mental!

Jim McDonnell
British & European Professional Boxing Champion
Boxing Commentator for Sky Television

Introduction

Why Punching?

Having had to face several hundred opponents 'in the street' and having been witness to thousands of 'live' fights over the last ten years I have come to the conclusion that a 'real' exponent of the fighting arts must incorporate all distances in his fighting discipline, after all a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The distance that most systems seem to favour is kicking distance, this is probably due to its attractiveness or perhaps 'celluloid peer pressure' (see my book **Real Kicking**) the most neglected distance of course is the devastating art of grappling (see my book **Real Grappling**) due to its Martial ugliness.

In between these two distances is punching, a seemingly indifferent range, not neglected though neither noticed. When you consider that most street confrontations start with some kind of dialogue, (see my book **Real Self Defence**) usually occurring at 'Punching range' it makes you wonder why, if punching range is the distance given, so many want to manufacture another, stepping out for a kick or in for a throw, ignoring that which is so startlingly immediate. It is simply a matter of logic that the closest and most available tool to the target is the very one to use. In nine out of ten cases the most available tool will be the hands. As demonstrated in **Real Grappling**, wrestling is a support art and as demonstrated in **Real Kicking**, kicking is, also a support art, punching, as I hope to demonstrate in this volume is THE MAIN ARTILLERY, the first line of attack.

For those interested in the art of pugilism this book also takes into account the sporting aspect.

Real Punching

Take a look on the sports shelf of any book shop and you will find a myriad of books on and about various fighting systems of the world, all encompassing the theories and technique of the ryu therein. This book differs from the foregoing in three ways: One; It isolates the 'hands' as attacking tools. Two; The techniques herein, though predominantly western boxing, may be utilised in, and are indeed born from, every system, and Three; All of the techniques endorsed in this text are empirical.

Most fighting systems of the world are uncannily similar. All offer the lead hand punch, reverse punch, hooks and uppercuts. The defences against the same are, also very alike. In my opinion it is the western boxing system of pugilism that rises above the maelstrom of other systems when 'advanced' punching is called for, this statement is not meant as a bias nor is it intended to offend, it's just an honest opinion based on years of pressure testing in the field.

The fact that the western boxer is ill prepared for both kicking and grappling ranges is out of the context of this book. This text may become the 'missing piece' in the martial arts jigsaw and will complete what was otherwise an unfinished picture.

If you are not that familiar with punching you may well wonder what more there is to be said about the subject, after all, a punch is just a punch, or so it would appear. The reason why I wrote this book and why it has found shelf space within the book shops is that a punch is far more than just a punch. A deeper look will unveil a labyrinth of concealed knowledge, an Aladdin's cave of intricacies and a treasure trove of 'data' that will enable the neophyte to punch and the expert to punch better.

'Hands' are the most accessible, effective and natural tool available for utilisation and survival on the 'pavement Arena'. Conscientious adherence to the techniques and theory's herein will not only

improve/perfect your punching ability for the dojo/gym it will also help markedly in your search for survival in a society cruelly infected with the disease 'VIOLENCE!' This book, as with all my books, is empirical, all of its techniques 'pressure tested' in an arena unshackled by rules, regulations, whistles and bells, where one mistake may prove fatal. I have successfully employed all of the techniques here endorsed 'in the field'. (I spend a lot of time in fields.)

With this in mind excellence in punching technique should be readily sought, and as quickly as possible, after all, you never never know how soon you may need their services.

Chapter One

Body Mechanics

Before I segregate and dissect the various compartments of 'over all' punching I would like to take a look at body mechanics, the practice of body weight transference, after all, it is from here that 'power' is derived. The fist is only the implement that delivers the blow, the 'bullet' if you like. The body, or the gun, is the power source, the generator, or the engine. Punching without body sponsorship will relegate your blows to the realms of ineffectiveness. Paradoxically the puncher who does utilise full body weight transference when executing a punch will amass tremendous power. A 9 stone fighter in a street scenario who 'punches his weight' with accuracy will find no difficulty knocking unconscious an 18 stone adversary.

Body mechanics is a system where by one drives the body weight, via the hip (and the hara) behind a chosen punch. Many practitioners, especially heavier people, punch from the arm or the shoulder utilising only a small part of the body weight, this may still generate a small percentage of available power but it will be minimal. To produce maximum power one must punch from the stomach, some call this focal point the 'Hara' and hint of internal power, though more realistically the 'Hara' (to be found in the belly button area of the abdomen) is the body's centre of gravity, to punch from here enables you to utilise the entire body weight, down to the ounce.

In theory this appears simple, the hip (left side or right side, depending upon which arm you employ to punch) follows the path of the elected punch. A right cross sees the right side of the

hip (from an orthodox stance) travelling forward along the same route as the punch, a left hook sees the left side of the hip (from an orthodox stance) travelling behind and along the same route as the punch. In the relevant chapters on individual punches I shall digress more.

In practice, of course, this is not quite as easy as it sounds, it requires great skill which is only born from much practice and perseverance. Like a finely tuned engine every thing must work in conjunction if smooth running is to be attained and maintained, if one small particle is out of 'sync' with the rest, smooth running will be lost. If the hip travels through too soon, power is lost, too late, power is lost, if the hip is not fully extended, power is again lost, if the hip is over extended, balance is impaired, if you over concentrate on hip commitment you may under-concentrate on other important factors like targeting, if the punch is off target all is wasted any way. Add to this list 'Kime' (body focus) and you have one more factor to consider. Every system, consciously or subconsciously, employs 'Kime' though they may not label it as so.

Kime is a means of focusing (or tensing) the body on the moment of impact, (the attacks impact upon the target) the muscles collectively 'tense' for a split second when your punch connects with the target, adding markedly to the power input of the said strike.

Kime must also run in conjunction with the hip thrust. Kime too soon or too late and its input is greatly or completely lost.

For the blow to maximise kime and hip thrust must culminate at the exact instance when the punch connects with the target, if they do not and are out of sync then you will be out of 'luck'. Once the three factors are running nicely in conjunction and power has been attained you will (should) be 'punching your weight'. For

those who strive for more (greedy) there is another advancement, 'Travelling' (this doesn't mean punching some one on the train) 'Travelling' with a technique is an advanced concept. In the 'crawl', 'walk' and 'run' syndrome travelling is the 'sprint'. To 'Travel' is to add to all of the foregoing criteria a step or a shuffle along the same route as the punch adding the momentum of moving body weight to hip thrust and kime.

For instance, from orthodox stance, when throwing a right cross you would step or shuffle forward with your left lead leg followed directly by your reverse right leg, this would be employed in conjunction with the hip thrust and kime. Theoretically it sounds easy, in practice it is not so. A step too close or not close enough to the target will put your distancing out, forcing the punch to lose power due to its over close proximity to the target, or miss the target completely because it is not close enough. If your 'step' before or after the punch the generated forward momentum will be lost and the 'travel' wasted, if the 'step' is too slow it will 'telegraph' your chosen punch. The extra power gained by travelling is amassed from the forward momentum of your body weight, to harness this power completely your forward moving leg and thus the body weight, should land in time with the impact of the blow or still be moving forward as the punch strikes the target, indeed a difficult task, but, with much practice it is easily attainable.

Putting it down on paper makes it all seem rather complicated, don't be discouraged by this veil because once lifted it will all seem rather simple, as Bruce Lee said, and I quote,

"BEFORE I STARTED TRAINING IN THE MARTIAL ARTS A PUNCH WAS JUST A PUNCH, A KICK JUST A KICK, WHEN I STARTED, A PUNCH WAS NO LONGER JUST A PUNCH, A KICK NO LONGER JUST A KICK. NOW THAT I UNDERSTAND TRAINING A PUNCH IS, AGAIN, JUST A PUNCH, A KICK JUST A KICK."

Chapter Two

Stances

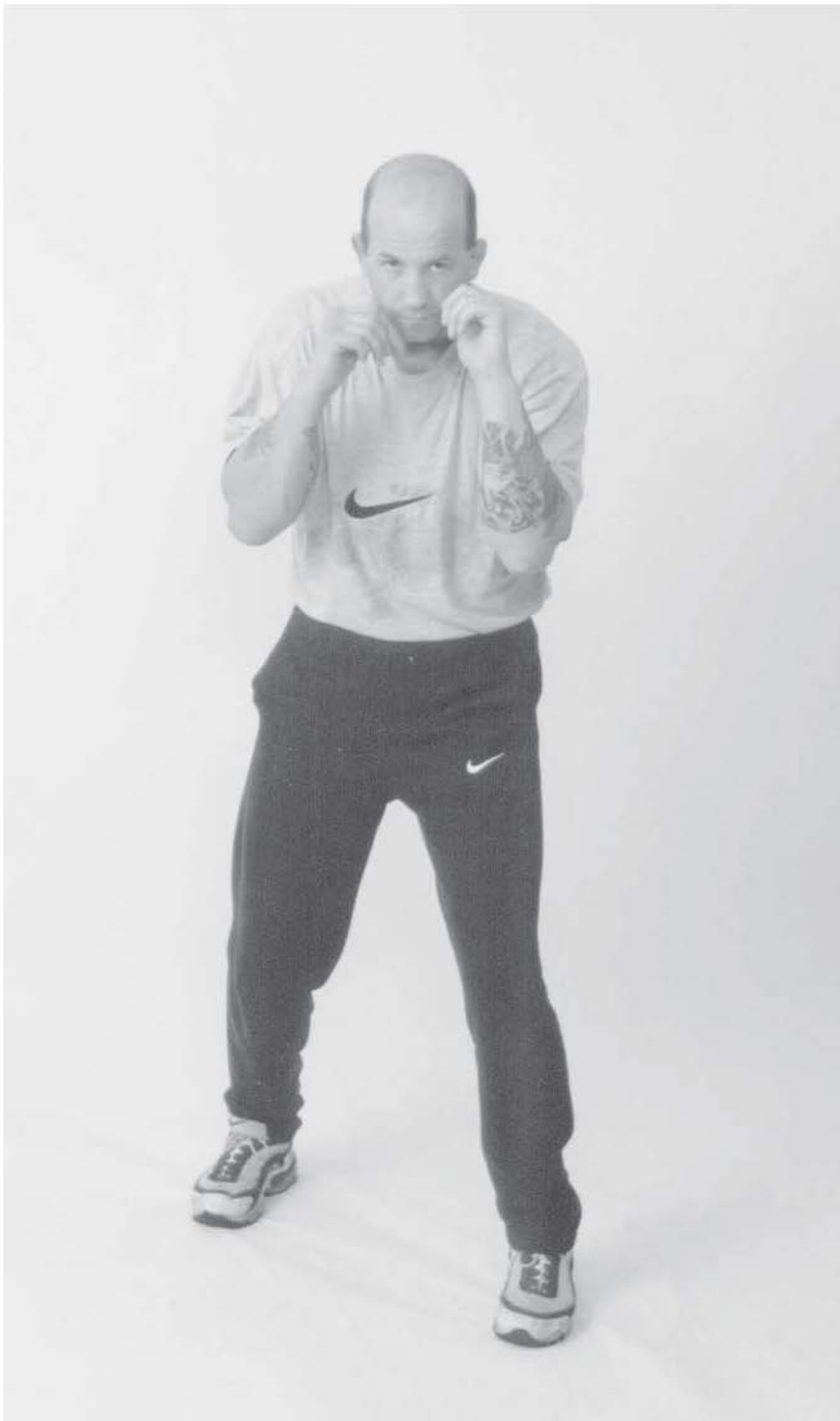
Choosing a stance is important, a bad posture will relegate your punching to lacklustre.

There are only two stances that are worthy of contention when it comes to choice, orthodox stance (left leg leading) and southpaw stance (right leg leading). As a general rule of thumb the orthodox stance is employed by the right handed fighter, the southpaw stance by the left handed fighter. Both former and latter leave the strongest hand at the rear, a little like chess where the weaker pawns lead the board and protect the stronger ruck, king and queen at the back.

This is my recommended system of use.

If you are left handed and opt for the southpaw stance please reverse the forthcoming instructions which are based on the orthodox fighter.

ORTHODOX STANCE: Left leg leading with the left foot turned slightly inwards, toes gripping the floor to enhance balance and stability. Rear right foot turned inwards on the ball of the foot to enhance speed of movement and aid hip twist. Legs shoulder width apart at a 45 degree angle (this angle offers ultimate balance and stability and should be maintained at all times).



Both knees should be bent from the hip upwards the torso should be turned at a 45 degree angle to narrow the opponent's target area, thus protecting the vulnerable solo plexus (under the breast bone).

Both elbows should be kept tightly in to the body to protect the abdomen/ribs/kidneys etc.

Right and left fists should be situated at each side of the jaw for its protection.

The head should be tilted with the chin touching the chest, forcing you to roll the eyes upward to see straight, this will protect the highly vulnerable chin/jaw. Hunching up the shoulders also adds to its protection.

Keep the fists relaxed with both palms facing inwards. If the fists are constantly flexed energy will be expended needlessly, only tense the fists on impact with the target.

Southpaw stance is a direct facsimile to orthodox stance with the right leg leading as opposed to the left.

Maintenance of the stance through out a fight is imperative, an off balance fighter will be easily knocked over or out.

The advanced player may move the arms from the conventional guard position other than to execute a punch but care should be taken not to leave the jaw exposed.

If you drop either side of the guard, for what ever reason, bring the shoulder of the relaxed arm up and above the chin line as a back up guard. Never drop both arms at the same time, always leave at least one arm protecting the jaw.

Chapter Three

The Jab

A very underrated punch, often seen as being a weak, support punch to the more consequential cross or hook. In reality it is a multifarious, potentially powerful, blow that is the fundamental driving force of all other punches.

Traditionally we see the jab performed in three ways that vary very little in style or stature.

KARATE:
The Karataka throws the jab, or lead hand punch, from a low guard or from the hip position (hikatae), twisting the fist and torso on impact with the target, the right supporting hand being sharply retracted to the opposite hip thus leaving the upper torso and face of the puncher, exposed Even at an advanced level 'hikatae' is encouraged.

KUNG-FU:
The kung-fu practitioner operates in a similar genre to the Karataka, keeping the attacking fist straight, fist inwards and punching with the bottom three knuckles as opposed to the top two. The fist does not turn on impact. The hip twist is a little more pronounced than that of the Karataka.

THE BOXER:
Realising the worth of an efficient jab the Boxer utilises it in 90% of his practice, throwing the punch similarly to his 'Martial' brothers, diverting slightly when he throws the punch from a tight guard and retracts it to a tight guard where it diligently protects the jaw. No 'hikatae' is employed.

The Western Boxing method is the most proficient of the three.

The jabs main use or purpose is to find or manufacture openings in the opponent's defences that the cross or hook punch may engineer, whilst efficiently doing so it also stuns and weakens the opponent. Fast, sharp jabs perform this task, ideally. The harder more powerful jab may be used to hurt or even knock out the opponent, or paradoxically, keep the forward moving opponent at bay.

A practised puncher will easily double or triple the jab, catching the opponent who only anticipates a single punch.

Once the jab has created an opening in the opponent's guard the 'big guns' (cross/hook) may finish the 'job' by manipulating the 'crack' in the opponent's armour.

The text book jab, a mid range punch, is thrown along a straight line from the guard to the target employing a small hip twist on impact. It is a 'stinging' punch with limited scope and range.

LONG RANGE JAB:
To augment the range and scope of the jab, amassing more power, speed and distancing, throw the same punch along the same line adding maximum hip twist on impact with the target. As full hip twist is attained push the stomach (hara) forward, at a 45 degree angle, to enhance the over all effectiveness of the punch.

RIGHT LEAN JAB: If you lean your body forward, down and to your own right the jab may be thrown in an upward motion, through the opponent's guard to the 'under' chin'. This catches many opponents by surprise, they only expect the jab to be thrown from the traditional 'on guard' position.

LEFT LEAN JAB: By leaning the body forward, down and to your own left the jab may, again, be thrown from an unexpected angle at the opponent's under chin. Due to the extreme angle the jabber must execute the punch by straightening the back right leg and (to a lesser degree) the left leg. It is not advised to twist the fist on impact with the target (the under chin or the body) because of the acute angle of the body.

In practice the jab should be worked 4-5 times more than the other punches. When shadow boxing (practising punches in to the air) practice may be abetted by holding a small (3-5 lb) punching weight in the jabbing hand.

Chapter Four

Right Cross

The right cross, it would appear, is the fighting worlds most favoured punch, the 'knock out' punch that commands power when ever it is thrown. Much over used by the Martial Arts contest fighter (reverse punch, gyakasuki) due to its notoriously 'safe' point scoring qualities. Paradoxically, even the street fight scenario seems dominated by its bastardised 'brothers'.

For the right handed fighter it is, naturally, the punch to apply, the 'old faithful' syndrome prevails when the 'heat is on'.

In the self defence situation the right cross has been my faithful and reliable compatriot for the last ten years, the punch that I always called upon when the going got a little tough, toted like a six gun in a Hollywood western.

Through out the different styles the right cross is uncannily similar, minor differences set them apart.

KARATE:
Thrown so often by the Karataka that the application of the reverse punch has become a perfunctory act. Executed from a low/no guard position or, more often, from the hikatae position with the supporting hand retracting sharply to the opposite hip. The retracting fist and the attacking fist turning on impact with the target. The right hip is thrust forward along the same line as the punch to enhance power whilst the right foot is kept firmly flat, to maintain balance. Whilst it does so it also inhibits full hip commitment and stifles fast 'travelling', (moving while attacking).

KUNG-FU:
Very similar technique used here to the Karataka. Kung-fu practitioners are less inclined to employ hikatae and more inclined to allow the right foot (whilst in an orthodox stance) to pivot on its ball promoting greater hip involvement and fast travelling. He also punches with the bottom three knuckles as opposed to the top two. The fist does not twist on impact with the target.

THE BOXER:
The right cross is savoured by the boxer who will only employ it when a 'good' opportunity arises usually reserved for the knock out or its potential. The boxer's fist position varies according to the distance at which the punch is being thrown.

A short right cross is applied with the straight fist (striking with the two major knuckles) the mid ranged punch sees the fist make a half turn whilst the long range punch exploits a full twist on impact with the target. The twist is used, primarily, to break the opponent's skin.

To be ultimately effective the cross must be explosive, It is at its best when coupled or combined with the jab, or other punches off which it may 'bounce'.

The Martial Artist has a tendency to throw the cross (and the lead hand punch) with the shoulder muscles pulled down, whilst this keeps the punches smartly uniformed it leaves the chin and head dangerously exposed. Paradoxically the boxer hunches the shoulder and back muscles, whilst this may not do anything for the look of the punch it does offer better protection for and off, the chin. Due to the shoulder hunch the boxer tends to punch from the shoulder rather than the stomach (hara), whilst the boxer may still surmount power within his technique he does not utilise it fully. A compromise, therefore should be quested, one that offers protection with out being power derivative.

The chin must be protected during execution of the punch, at the same time the punch should derive from the hara rather than the shoulders. It is advised therefore that the shoulder should be kept hunched for protection but not allowed to dominate so much that the punch is influenced by it, one should consciously punch from the hara until it becomes a reflex action to do so.

As a final thought on the foregoing, a lot of fighters have no conception of the dangers involved in not exercising chin protection, for the non conformist I would advise that they test their wares (more specifically fighting without a good guard) in the ring against a pugilist of repute, I guarantee immediate enlightenment.

RIGHT CROSS:
A most powerful technique (if correctly executed) utilising the entire body weight. Thrown from the back, right leg whilst in orthodox stance. Throw the right fist toward the target (jaw) simultaneously thrusting your right hip forward, along the same route as the punch. Your hip should fully extend and thrust in conjunction with the punches connection of the jaw.

Independent right crosses should be practised and employed, most practitioners of different ryu (style) rely up on the jab to build momentum for the cross, telegraphing it to the opponent, who knows that the cross will be preceded by the jab. Randomly

mobilise the cross as an independent punch. This will often penetrate the opponent's guard unopposed due to its unexpectedness.

Against the attacking, forward moving opponent the independent 'cross' is a choice punch, firstly because of the aforementioned unexpectability, secondly because the power of the punch is doubled by the opponent's forward momentum.

Another reason for the utilisation of the independent right (or any independent punch) is that in the 'live' scenario it is most often the first independent punch that dictates the rest of the fight, a 'good one' will end the fight immediately in your favour, a bad first punch may mean defeat or an elongated victory.

It can be very difficult to surmount power in a punch without the momentum assistance of a support punch, much practice at 'throwing it alone' is necessary if independent power and speed is to be attained.

Throwing the punch from a no guard position will be foreign to many. From this position the punch is farther away from the target (jaw) than a punch thrown from a high guard. Whilst the high guard is essential in the controlled environment (dojo, gym) no guard (in the earliest stages of an altercation) is just as important in the uncontrolled arena (the street). Once you raise your guard 'outside' your opponent will immediately be warned of your intentions losing you any opportunity of a surprise, pre-emptive strike, also lessening your probabilities of a knock out, the opponent who is aware of an oncoming punch will prepare (consciously or subconsciously) for its absorption, lessening the impetus of the said punch.

It is fair to say that if you want to be an effective 'no guard' puncher you have to practice the same.

Chapter Five

Hooking Punches

The hooking punch is probably the most natural of all punching techniques. Most uncontrolled situations are dominated by wild swinging 'hooks' (most of which miss the target). When control goes out of the window, hooks (great big wild ones) come through the door in abundance.

Paradoxically, despite the natural tendencies of the punch it is, for reasons unknown, a difficult punch to teach in the controlled arena, many failing to grasp the 'mechanics' of the punch.

Once it is mastered it becomes awe inspiringly effective offering much power and speed in close range sparring or fighting. Its knock out potential is far greater than any other punch on the curriculum due to the greater target mass available to it.

K.O.'s are secured when the jaw is struck sharply along/on the jaw line, any where from the ear to the point of the chin, giving an over all target area of about 5-6 inches.

Due to the nature of the straight punch it only has open to it the point of the jaw (unless the opponent is facing away from you) at which to aim, approximately one inch, demanding of the punch, pin point accuracy to secure unconsciousness in the opponent. Because the hooking punch attacks the side of the jaw as opposed to the point it has the full length of the jaw to target, pin point accuracy is therefore not so paramount.

KARATE: The Karataka very rarely throws a hook punch, though they can be found in their multitude within Kata (some times 'hidden' within) they are not taught openly on the curriculum.

The hooks within the Kata are utilised in much the same way as all Karate punches, shoulders down, support arm in hikatae. If it were utilised more readily by the Karataka it would become a major part of his armoury.

KUNG FU: Much the same here as the Karataka, though the kung fu player does seem to encourage a greater repertoire of punches that fit nicely in with their practice of continuous sparring, unlike the Karataka who opts for the 'stop, start' method.

THE BOXER: It is well known that the boxer greatly favours the hooking punch, (even famed for it). Thrown from the high guard position and retracted to the same. The amateur boxer throws the hook utilising good body weight transference with the punching elbow on the same level as the fist twisting the fist on impact with the target so that the palm of the punching hand is facing downwards. The professional boxer throws the hook with the punching elbow slightly lower than the fist, the fist does not twist on impact, the palm faces in to the puncher's own body. Both methods are equally effective, it is just a case of which one suits.

LEFT HOOK: Thrown from the leading leg of an orthodox stance, a very advanced punch holding great rewards for those who acquire perfection. Aimed ultimately at the opponent's jaw. Very powerful when abetted by the transferred body weight.

All hooking punches are thrown with a direct facsimile to a 'slap', attacking with the knuckles as opposed to the flat of the hand.

For maximum power push your right hip forward and slightly to the left before you strike, keeping your eye on the opponent's jaw.

As you throw the left fist toward the target, pull the hip back to its original position and push your left hip sharply across to your right, following the path of the punch, as it connects with the jaw follow through for maximum effect.

The hip movement will ensure ultimate body weight transference.

RIGHT HOOK: A very powerful, accessible punch, applied again with the facsimile of a 'slap' using the knuckles as opposed to the flat of the hand, to attack. Thrown from the back right leg (whilst in orthodox stance).

Throw the punch from the outside in a semi circular motion towards the target, simultaneously thrust the right hip sharply forward, following the route of the punch.

As it connects with the jaw follow through with the hip and fist for maximum effect.

As with all punches hooks should be practised from the 'on guard' and the 'no guard' position. In the street hooks may be used as a first line attack because of the aforementioned K.O. qualities, in the dojo or gym however they are more effective when assisted by straight punches, more specifically the jab, which will find or make routes of entry in the opponent's armoury.

Chapter Six

Uppercuts

A wonderful punch with great power and accessibility to the advanced puncher. This is not a punch for the novice.

To be effective the uppercut requires excellent timing and good body control, due to the close proximity that is needed for the employment of this punch it also takes a lot of courage to attempt it, it is likely that the neophyte puncher may get 'hit' en route.

KARATE:
The uppercut emerges through out Kata, though the punch is not on the teaching curriculum, it is almost unheard of for the traditional karataka to employ the uppercut, to do so in competition would likely end in disqualification.

KUNG FU:
Utilised more readily by the kung fu player than the Karataka, though again, not nearly enough.

THE BOXER:
The uppercut is the fourth of the punches employed by the boxer. Because of the high skill factor only the more advanced player utilises it to its full potential.

The versatility of the uppercut allows it to sneak through minute gaps in the opponent's armoury where other punches would find no room. It may be utilised at short range or long range, to the body or the head. The advanced player scores many K.O.'s with this punch, due to the large target area open to it and because it

is thrown in an upwards motion out side of the opponent's eye line, it often strikes the target undetected and unopposed.

It may be directed through the centre of the opponent's guard or, as a simultaneous counter attack, inside or underneath the opponent's attacking arm.

LEFT UPPERCUT:
Thrown from the leading left leg of an orthodox stance aimed, ultimately, at the opponent's jaw. Very powerful if correctly engaged.

For maximum power push your right hip forward and to your left before you strike, slightly bending at the knees so that you are just below the level of the target (jaw). Throw your left fist forward, twisting the punch on impact with the jaw so that the palm of the punching hand is facing inwards (to your own body), simultaneously retract your right hip sharply to its original position and push upwards from your crouched position, thrust your left hip forward and upward, following the route of the punch. On connection with the jaw, follow through with the punch and the hip for maximum effect.

RIGHT UPPERCUT: Thrown from the back right leg, whilst in orthodox stance. Bend slightly at the knees so that you are just below the level of the target (jaw). Throw your right fist upward, twisting the fist on impact with the jaw, so that the palm is facing inwards (to your own body), simultaneously push upward from your crouched position and sharply thrust your right hip forward and upward following the same route as the punch. On connection with the target follow through with the punch and the hip for maximum effect. For the street scenario the uppercut should be practised from a no guard position. It may also be successfully implemented with the aid of the supporting hand, used to pull the opponent, via his attire, into the blow.

BREATHING:
With all the aforementioned punching techniques correct 'breathing' is essential. One should exhale through the nose or mouth (either will suffice) as you throw the chosen punch. This will regulate the breathing, feed the working muscles with oxygen and greatly enhances 'Kime'.

Chapter Seven

Footwork

Footwork, to the puncher, is as consequential as the punching its self, paradoxically, bad footwork will stem the flow of his work like a clot in an artery.

In principle the basic steps are easy, working the steps in conjunction with your hands is another matter, entirely. A great deal of practice is necessary if competence is to be sought. Footwork should be smooth and the steps small if the feet are to compliment the hands. The shoulder width gap, between left foot and right, should, at all times be retained, at no time should the feet meet. If you are attacked whilst the feet are together you will be easily knocked off balance, or over, it is also impractical to launch an attack from such an unstable position. For light, swift and smooth movement keep on the balls of your feet whilst moving.

FOOTWORK, ORTHODOX STANCE:
When moving around to the left, or simply to the left, move the left foot to your left followed smartly by the right.

When moving around to the right, or simply to the right, move the right foot to your right followed smartly by the left.

When moving forwards, move the left foot forward followed smartly by the right. When moving backwards move the right foot back followed smartly by the left. If you move in any other way than above it is likely that the feet will meet and stability will be lost.

Whichever direction you wish to move, the same side of your body should lead, left foot to left side, right foot to right side etc. The feet should gently glide along the surface of the floor as opposed to actually leaving the floor.

It is not advised to punch or attack at the same time as you are moving laterally. If you are moving forward, towards the opponent, attacking is safe (travelling), if you are moving backwards, attacking whilst you move is difficult though still safe (Defensive fighting).

It is also possible to attack whilst moving around, laterally, to the left using the jab with out impairing balance, though the skill factor is high. Using crosses or hooks, however, whilst moving laterally WILL impair balance and is not to be recommended, better to stop and find stability before attempting such attacks.

Moving around, or straight to the right offers no 'safe' opportunities to strike whilst on the move, right lateral movement, therefore, should be reserved for fast evasion or repositioning. The general rule with footwork is 'move, stop, strike'.

Correct footwork should be practised, at first, slowly and meticulously until perfection is attained. Practice moving around a punch bag, or a stationary partner, without throwing a punch. First, clockwise, then anti clock wise, towards the bag then away from it, always being sure to move the correct foot first, according to which direction you wish to move in, if you move the wrong foot the 45 degree stance, and thus balance, will be lost, the feet may meet or cross, impeding you even more. Regular practice should see the transition from position to position performed in a smooth, sharp, efficient manner.

Once you feel capable with the fundamentals of footwork tie it in with single punches, double punches and eventually, combinations, soon the hands and feet will be as one.

Chapter Eight

Angular Punches

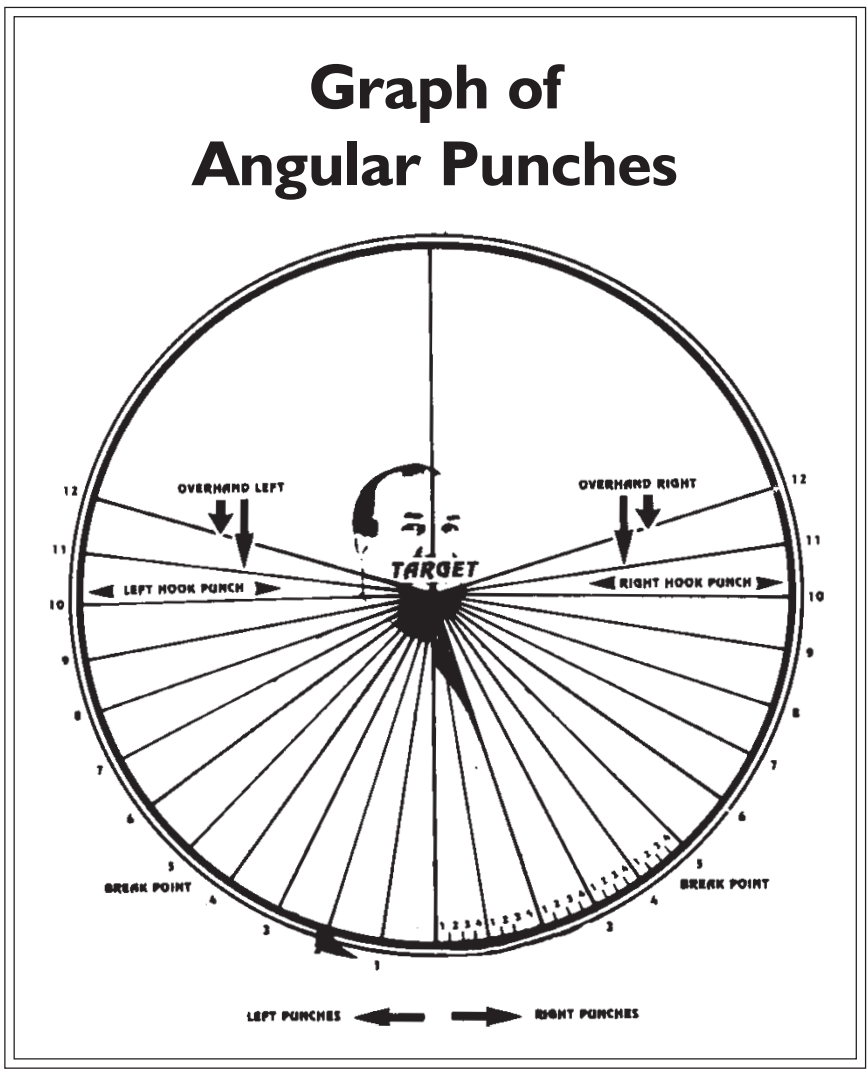
Having trained in fighting arts all of my life I have always had a reasonable knowledge of 'punching' so I was intrigued whenever I watched the boxing on the T.V. to see punches being thrown that were completely foreign to me. I knew what a 'hook' and a uppercut was, I recognised the jab and cross, but what were those punches that fell in between? Not quite a cross though neither a hook, not quite a hook though neither an uppercut. The people who I asked, some, proficient boxers, didn't know, either, though they threw the same punches instinctively. Through my own research I discovered that they (the unknown punches) were angular or cross punches, bastardisations of the straight, hook or uppercut, two punches mingled in to one. A slight hook on a straight right cross would find an opening in the opponent's defence that the straight cross or full hook would not.

Angling punches, I soon found, meant that any opening, crack or crevice in the opponent's armoury could be manipulated by tailoring a punch to fit the said gap.

Basic punching, (non diversification of the original three, straight, hooked, uppercut), is, metaphorically, a little like a shoe shop that only caters for three sizes of shoe, this is all well and good if you belong to one of these shoe sizes, if not the shop loses its usability, and so it is with punching, whilst there are openings for the three major punches all is fine, if there are no openings your hands become redundant as attacking tools. If, however, you learn the mechanics of angular punches, instead of three lines of attack you

end up with an infinite amount, then, no gap in the opponent's defence, no matter how acute the angle, is beyond reaching.

If you look at the graph of angular punches you will see exactly what I mean, and the direct relationship between the punches. Also the points on the graph where one punch comes closer to being another or actually transforms into another, a cross in to a hook, a hook in to an uppercut. etc. Confused? *Let me enlarge on the graph . . .*



'0' on the graph represents the straight punch, left or right, and the conventional uppercut, left or right.

'10' represents the conventional hook punch, left or right.

'11' and '12' represent the overhand right or left hook.

All the numbers in between, from '1'-'9' represent angled variations of the three conventional punches.

The left side of the graph represents left punch variations, the right side of the graph, right punch variations.

In the case, as a for instance, of the conventional right cross, it starts out as a straight punch which travels along the line between '0' and 'target'. If that route to target is obstructed by a tight guard the puncher may chose to throw the cross along angle No '1', adding a slight hook to the cross, if No '1' does not offer a great enough angle to take the punch around the opponent's guard he may chose to throw the punch along angle '2', '3' or '4'. All of these punches would be classed as 'hooked crosses', the hook becoming more prominent the higher the number angle that you chose.

No '5' on the graph is the 'break point', this is where the cross becomes more hooked than straight and is therefore classed as a 'crossed hook', as the angle becomes more great, 6, 7, 8 etc. the punch becomes more and more hooked until, at angle '10' it transforms in to a conventional right hook. This may be reversed, the chosen punch may start as a conventional right hook, travelling along the line from angle 10 to target. As the punch comes down the scale and the angle decreases it reaches break point at angle 5 and then becomes more and more straight, until at angle 0 it, again becomes the conventional straight right cross.

The system works the same with the conventional right uppercut, which starts, traditionally, at angle '0', as the angle increases up the number scale so does the degree of hook in the punch, up to angle 4 all of these punches would be classed as 'hooked uppercuts'. At angle 5 break point, the punch becomes more hook than uppercut and so, between 5 & 9 the punches are classed as 'uppercut hooks'. At angle 10 we are back to the conventional right hook. Angle 11 & 12 are overhand right hooks (or left hooks on the left side of the scale). An overhand hook is a punch that is thrown above the opponent's head and guard then 'dropped' downwards on to the target.

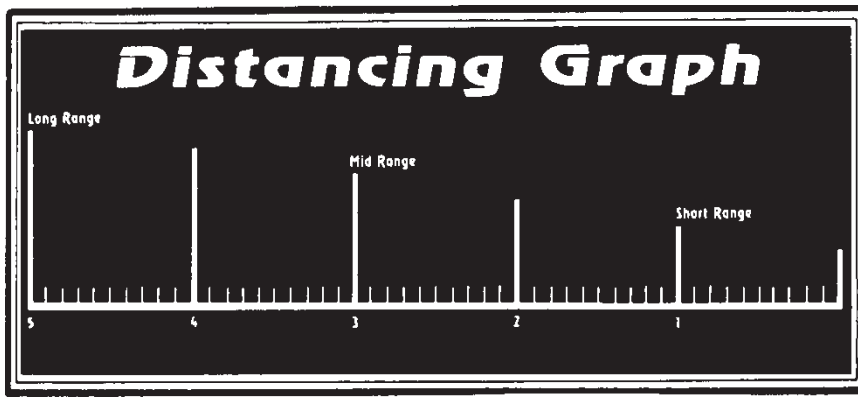
The left side of the scale deals with the left jab, hook and uppercut, all are thrown from the left lead leg (whilst in orthodox stance).

The left hook and uppercut are performed with an exact facsimile to the right hook and uppercut, on the right side of the scale. The left jab works the same as the right cross, starting conventionally, along angle '0' to target. From angle 1- 4 the punch would be classed as a 'hooked jab', angle '5', break point, to angle '9' the punch becomes more hooked than straight and is therefore classed as a 'jabbed hook'.

As a final point on 'angles' you will notice on the graph, between numbers 1-5, in between each major angle number, minor angle numbers, along which less deviated punches may be thrown.

Almost every punch that you throw will vary slightly in angle from the last, deeming every punch different. This gives you a limitless choice of punches from which to chose, all born from the conventional, hook, straight and uppercut.

Add to the angle graph the 'distancing graph' and, again all of the punches take on a new context.



The most common punching range is No 3, mid range. Most fighters feel competent and safe at this distance. Long and short range punches are also utilised (though less so) at some time, by most fighters. All distances are beneficial to the puncher. It is fair to say that the more powerful blows are thrown at mid range.

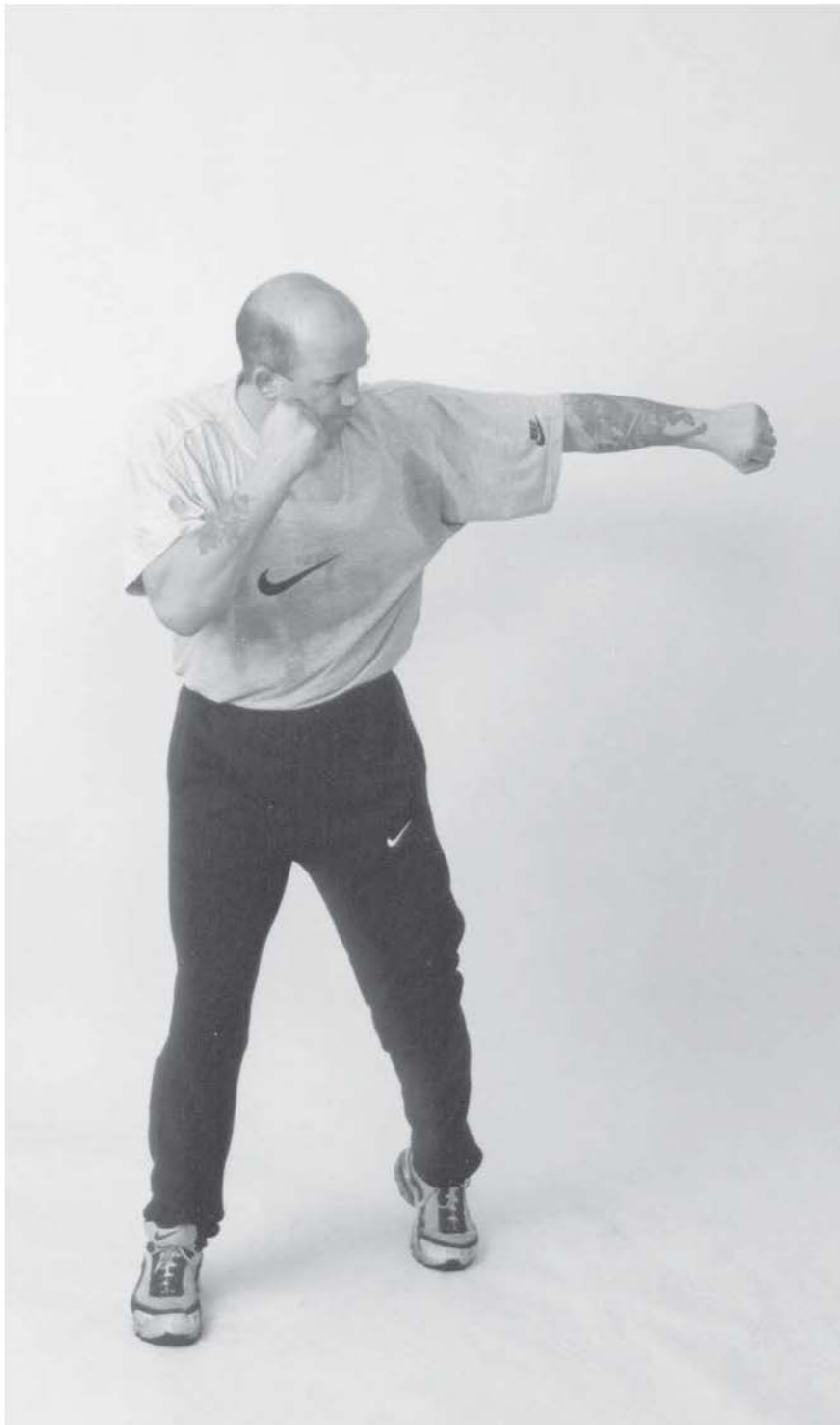
The long and short range punches demand a higher skill factor to transfer body weight behind the blow.

The smaller lines, in between the major angles (1-5) represent minor ranges in between the three principle.

STRAIGHT PUNCHES. JAB & CROSS:
The short to long range jab is executed as formerly described in chapter 3, the jab. The right cross varies very little between short and long range, the hip twist behind the punch and the swivel on the ball of the right foot to aid the twist is the same throughout the ranges, though mid to long range does benefit more from the body weight transference and momentum than the shorter ranges. On the short range cross, the fist does not twist on impact with the target, the major two knuckles are used to strike but the palm of the attacking hand remains inwards. The longer the range of the punch the more the fist turns until, at full range the fist turns completely with the palm of the attacking hand facing downward.

HOOK PUNCHES:
The short range hook requires very little arm movement and major body movement if power is to be attained.

The right arm (right hook) is thrown directly from the guard to the target lifting the right elbow to assist, the fist turns just enough to ensure that the two major knuckles strike the target. The further the hook travels along the distancing graph the more the punching arm straightens and the attacking fist turns, until, at long range, No 5, the arm is straight and the wrist of the punching fist is bent so acutely that the palm is facing towards your own body. Alternatively, on the long range hook, you may keep the wrist straight, turning the palm outwards, away from the target, striking again with the two major knuckles.



UPPERCUT:
The uppercut may be thrown in two ways, upward, as its title implies, or straight.

The straight uppercut is thrown in the same genre as the straight cross, with the palm of the fist facing upwards as opposed to inwards or downwards. The basic technique of the traditional uppercut is as described in Chapter Six, Uppercuts.

It may be thrown at short range, from a very tight guard, which restricts body weight transference The palm of the attacking hand turns inwards (to your own body) on impact with the target. As the punch reaches the longer distances it becomes necessary for the wrist of the attacking fist to bend more and more inwards to enable the puncher to strike with the two major knuckles. At No 5, long range on the distancing graph, the wrist bend will be extremely acute.

The advanced player will combine all of the aforementioned, instinctively.

To practice angular punches (at various ranges) use a punch bag and go 'around the clock' with your chosen punch. Starting perhaps with a straight right cross, With each consecutive punch add a slight angle (or hook) until you reach break point (No 5 on the angular graph) where the punch becomes more of a hook than a cross, continue adding angle until you reach the conventional 'hook' (No 10 on the angular graph), adding more angle after the conventional hook will give you the 'overhand right' (No 11 & 12 on the angular graph). Practice 'around the clock' with all of your punches, vary the ranges, short, medium, long etc.

You can also practice 'angular' in the air (shadow boxing) in the same 'around the clock' manner.

Chapter Nine

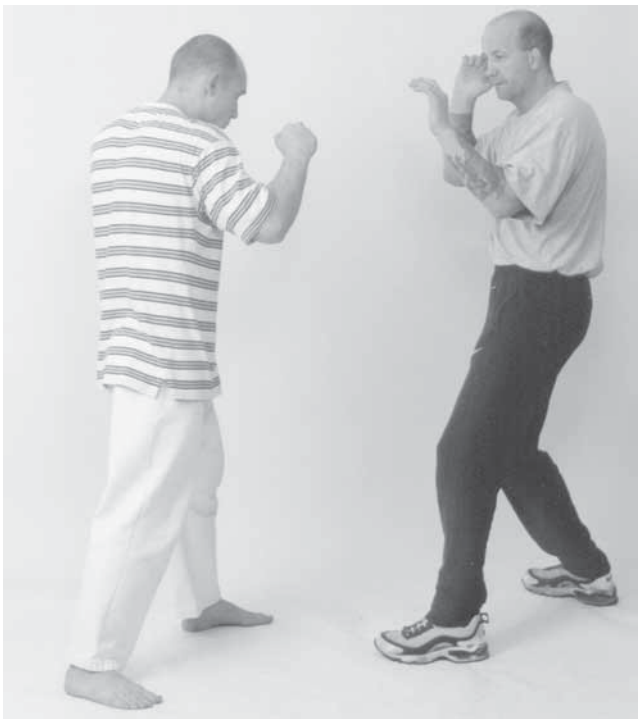
Drawing Techniques

"Come In To My Parlour,
Said The Spider To The Fly."

Drawing (not with a pencil) is the art of tempting or coercing an opponent in to a trap by means of tactical play. A little like chess where you lead your opponent to believe that you have made a mistake by deliberately sacrificing a pawn, he takes advantage of the 'supposed' error by 'taking' your offering not realising that by doing so he has left his king unprotected.

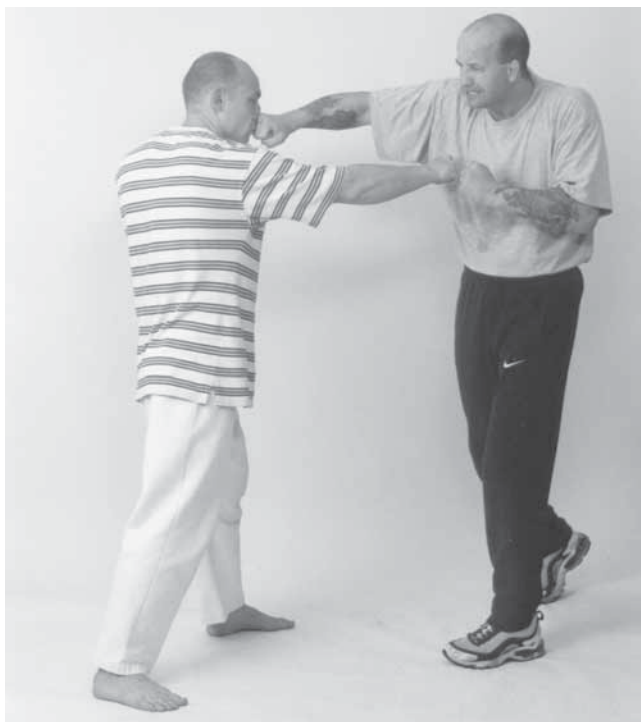
This may be achieved by two methods. The first method is to show the opponent a gap in your defence by dropping or lifting your guard exposing the target that you wish to 'offer' as bait in the hope that the opponent will take the sacrifice and attack the exposed area. When (if) he does, you penalise him by attacking him as he is about to take the bait.

For instance, If I raise my guard slightly, exposing my abdomen as 'bait' my opponent, believing this to be a tactical error on my part, attempts to attack the opening with a low right cross (as illus) as he moves in to do so I attack his jaw with a right cross of my own. The opponent is so keen to take advantage of my 'error' that he fails to see my trap. You may even let the opponent 'take' the bait once or twice to lull him in to a false sense of security, then, when he least expects it, release the trap.



Showing the opening . . .

'Stop' hitting as he takes the bait



Another coercement is to feign tiredness or injury tempting your opponent to 'come in for the kill', as he does so suddenly launch an unexpected attack catching him unawares.

Throwing weak techniques (some of us do not have to feign this) at an opponent also encourages him to come forward with counter attacks, happy in the belief that he will not get hurt because your technique is 'weak'. For instance, throwing a sloppy, weak jab will encourage your opponent to throw, perhaps, a right cross counter punch, because you are expecting the counter it will be easy to 'slip' countering or pre-empting it with a left hook to his now exposed chin. If you throw a half hearted right cross it will encourage the opponent to move forward to counter, as he does so pre-empt him with a left hook.

There are various techniques which will 'draw' an opponent, many of them depend upon the genre of fighter in front of you. If he is a forward moving offensive fighter weak, drawing punches would effectively lure him in to 'bigger' techniques. If he is a backward moving defensive fighter offer him an 'opening' in your defence or feign tiredness/injury to encourage him to be offensive.

The best way to perfect these techniques is in actual sparring where experimenting with different methods will show you what does and does not work. Every fighter is different, what may work on one may fail abysmally on another, the only way to find out and perfect is to try.

Chapter Ten

Feints

Bruce Lee once said that when two fighters of equal ability meet, the master of the feint will victor.

The feint is brothers with drawing techniques, both are tactical ploys to manufacture 'openings' in an opponent's defence. The latter does so by encouraging the opponent to attack an opening that isn't really there, manipulating the opening left by the opponent's irrationality. The former, creates openings in the opponent's defence by pretending to attack one area of the opponent's body, thus drawing his guard to the said attack and then throwing a real attack to the gap left by the falsely deployed guard.

This may be achieved by feigning a low blow to draw the opponent's guard down, long enough for you to manipulate the 'high' opening left, or by feigning a high blow, drawing the opponent's guard upwards, long enough for you to strike the manufactured 'low' opening.

The feint blow and the intended blow may be any of your choosing, as long as they flow, and the intended blow fits in to the opening created by your feint, for instance, it would be futile to create a high opening with a low feint only to employ another low punch as your intended one.

You may use any combination that fits the circumstances, experimenting with different methods will unearth many variations.

Because the feint draws the guard away from the area that it is meant to protect, the intended blow, especially the high face punch, has the potential to finish the fight, not so much because the target area has been left unprotected, more because the falsely deployed guard (and the opponent's mind) believes that the feint punch is a real one and thus is too preoccupied with it to see the intended blow, which goes through completely unchallenged by the unprepared recipient. As formerly stated, it is the unseen blow that causes most damage because the body cannot prepare for the blow that it does not see.

It is good practice, when using a feint, to first actually strike and hurt the opponent by fully committing the blow once or twice before you employ it as a feint, the opponent is far more likely to deploy his guard to block a punch that has already hit and hurt him, and, because up until that point you have not used the punch as a feint he will lulled all the more in to a false sense of security.

The feints greatest attribute is the fact that, because people block as an instinctive reaction, the same feint may be used again and again on the same opponent who will automatically try to block it, even, if and when they don't want to.

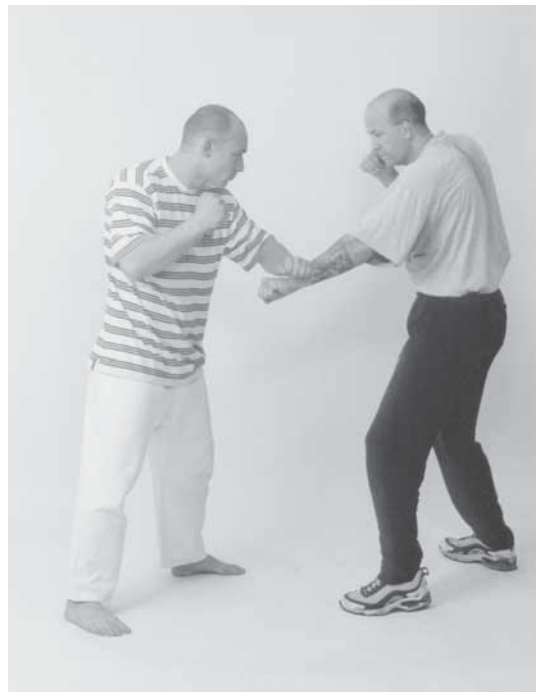
Here are a few to savour.

In all of the forthcoming techniques the first named is the feint punch and the second named is the intended punch.

LOW LEFT JAB, HIGH RIGHT CROSS:
This combination is ideal for a knock out because, if successful the jab feint exposes the opponent's jaw to the 'big' right cross.

Firstly, throw a couple of hard left jabs to the opponent's body, when he responds by lowering his guard to block, throw a fast half jab just close enough to the target to entice the opponent's

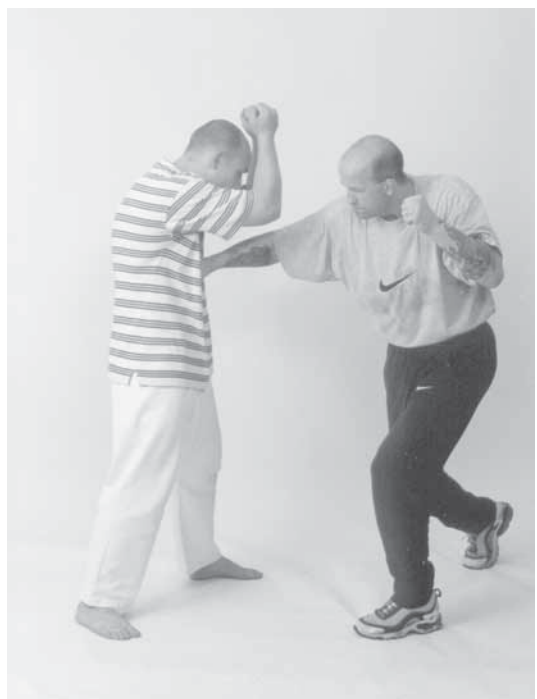
guard down, almost simultaneously throw the right cross to the opponent's exposed jaw. The most important factor here is to follow the feint almost simultaneously with the right cross, any delay and the intended punch will be easily spotted and thus blocked. An experienced player will deploy the opponent's guard with a simple flick of the shoulder (left or right, depending upon the feint you wish to actuate) which, to the defender, will appear to be the beginnings of an actual attack.



Feint low jab

High right cross

HIGH LEFT JAB, LOW RIGHT CROSS /HOOK:
This is an exact opposite of the previous combination. Throwing a high left jab to draw the opponent's guard upward thus exposing his rib and abdomen area to your right cross. Firstly, throw and score with a few stiff left jabs, when the opponent reacts by raising his guard to block your jab throw a sharp half jab towards his face, just close enough to convince the opponent that it is a real blow, (it isn't necessary to score with the feint punch, only to convince the opponent that you are trying to) then, almost simultaneously, throw a strong right cross to the opponent's exposed abdomen/rib area.



DOUBLE JAB:
No matter how many times you use this combination it works, even on the same opponent. If and when he finally does become accustomed to the double jab and its effectiveness wanes you may add another jab parenting the 'triple jab', and it will 'work' again. As with the other combinations, initially build the opponent's reaction with hard, hurting single jabs, when you are happy that the opponent's reaction is sufficient, throw a sharp, half jab just close enough to the target to gain the desired reaction, then almost simultaneously double up with the intended jab.

LOW RIGHT CROSS, HIGH LEFT HOOK:
Aim the low right cross at the opponent's rib/abdomen area, a couple of hard hitting shots will catalyse a marked reaction from the opponent whose guard will 'drop' in an attempt to engage the cross. When the reaction is sufficient throw a sharp half cross to the body, close enough to manufacture the desired reaction, the almost simultaneously, throw a high left hook to the opponent's exposed jaw.

LOW LEFT JAB, HIGH LEFT HOOK:
A difficult combination with a high skill factor, paradoxically, if perfected it has excellent K.O. potential.

Throw a couple of hard hitting jabs to the opponent's rib/abdomen area to cause a reaction in his guard, when the reaction is sufficient and his guard is moving down to engage the punch throw a sharp half jab towards the opponent's mid section the, almost simultaneously retract the left hand and attack over the opponent's descending guard with the intended left hook striking his exposed jaw.

Care must be taken with this combination to avoid the opponent's right cross, if he releases it as you are moving in to employ your left hook, you will meet it head on.

There are of course many more feints than the few aforementioned. Experiment and find the ones that work for you.

Chapter Eleven

Combinations

Combination punching is not as easy as you would imagine, it is an acquired art. Each punch of any given combination must flow smoothly with the last and the next, whilst still retaining balance, utilising body weight transference, timing, distancing, accuracy etc. etc. Each punch should, automatically seek out an open and vulnerable target. Combinations (and similar punches) are wasted if they strike the opponent's guard or non vulnerable areas like the highly muscular back or chest.

In order that the combinations flow they must go with as opposed to the body's mechanics, each punch should prime the next. For instance, a right hook would not flow if it followed a right cross, a left hook would.

Ultimately one should aim to achieve 'automatic' combinations, where the body feels out parties of punches without the restriction of conscious thought, for the brain to do this it must have multifarious combinations programmed into it, a little like data in a computer's memory bank, when you press recall on the keyboard the computer feeds out the stored data, automatically. Feed the various combinations into your own memory banks, then, when the situation 'demands' it will also 'feed out' automatically.

The key to learning combinations is to start small, combinations of two punches will suffice in the beginning, build to three or four, five, six and so on. Also, practice as many different variations of the 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 punch combinations as you can so that

eventually your memory bank will be holding so many that it will be able to mix and intermingle all the different combinations to suit the various opponents or situations, giving you, ultimately, an infinite number of different variations of the originals.

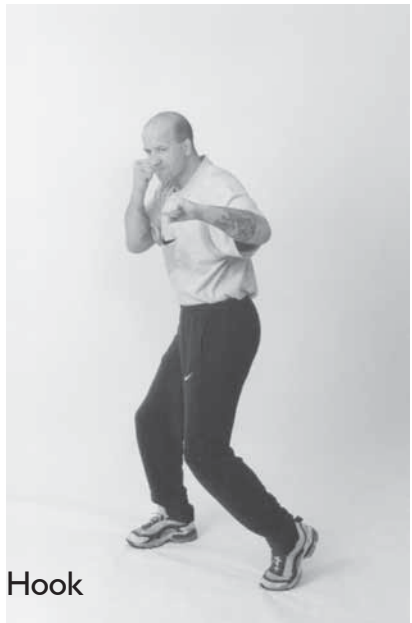
To start with I shall list several combinations that I personally practice and teach, you must enlarge on these and develop more of your own.

All the forthcoming combinations may be aimed to the body, head, or an association of both. For them to be effective there should be no gap, stutter or stop between each blow, each consecutive punch takes advantage of the opening in the opponent's guard created by the previous punch, if it is in any way delayed (stutters or stops) the said opening will close before it can be utilised, thus neutralising the punch.

1. LEFT JAB, RIGHT CROSS. (2)

2. LEFT JAB, RIGHT HOOK. (2)
3. RIGHT CROSS, LEFT HOOK. (2)

Cross



Hook

4. LEFT HOOK, RIGHT CROSS. (2)
5. RIGHT CROSS, LEFT UPPERCUT. (2)

Cross

Uppercut

6. LEFT UPPERCUT, RIGHT CROSS. (2)
7. RIGHT UPPERCUT, LEFT HOOK. (2)
8. LEFT JAB, RIGHT CROSS, LEFT HOOK. (3)
9. RIGHT UPPERCUT, LEFT HOOK, RIGHT HOOK. (3)
10. LEFT UPPERCUT, RIGHT CROSS, LEFT HOOK. (3)
11. RIGHT CROSS, LEFT HOOK, RIGHT UPPERCUT. (3)
12. LEFT JAB, RIGHT CROSS, LEFT UPPERCUT, RIGHT UPPERCUT. (4)
13. RIGHT CROSS, LEFT UPPERCUT, RIGHT HOOK, LEFT HOOK, RIGHT CROSS. (6)
14. LEFT JAB, RIGHT CROSS, LEFT JAB RIGHT CROSS, LEFT JAB, RIGHT CROSS. (6)
15. LEFT UPPERCUT, RIGHT UPPERCUT, LEFT HOOK, RIGHT HOOK, LEFT JAB, RIGHT CROSS, LEFT HOOK. (7)

As you can see, the combination possibilities are infinite. Note also how each consecutive punch flows with the last and leaves the body ideally positioned for the next punch. For instance, in combination No 10 the first punch leaves the puncher's hip to the extreme right, ideally situated for the right cross. The right cross leaves the hip fully extended forward, ideally positioned for the left hook. Try to construct your own combinations, similarly.

Bag work is the best method of practising combination punching. Start off lightly with small combinations, gradually, over a period of time (several months) build the combinations. Ultimately, try ad-libbing combinations, see how many punches that you can throw without stopping or breaking the flow.

At first this will prove to be very difficult, in time, however, it will become easier, eventually an automatic response.

Chapter Twelve

Defences And Counter Attacks

Knowing how to attack is all fine and well, but, it is only 50% of the needed curriculum. The other 50% is defence work, knowing how to avoid being hit your self and counter attacking the blows you have managed to evade/block. Once these blocks and evasions have been learned to a reasonable standard you, the defender, may incorporate attacks/counter attacks in to the blocks and evasions so as to take full advantage of the attacker who, momentarily leaves him self open for attack/counter attack whilst he is busy attacking, himself.

Never lose sight of the fact that whilst defence is very important, it is attack that is the best means of defence (especially in the self defence scenario).

DEFENCE AND COUNTER ATTACKS AGAINST THE JAB: There are several defences against the jab.

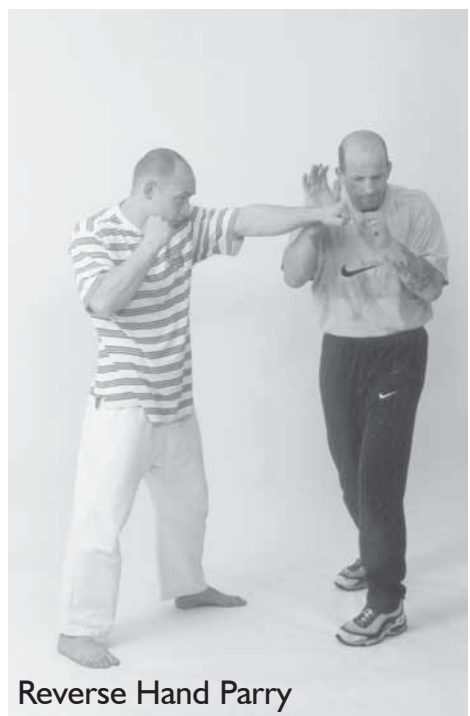
1. LEAD HAND PARRY:
As the jab comes towards your face parry it across to your right with the palm of the left lead hand. It is important with this parry, and all parries, not commit the parrying hand too much in case the attack is thrown by the opponent as a ploy/feint to falsely deploy your guard.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
Counter with a right cross, hook or if you are sharp, a counter jab with the left, parrying hand. Target the body or the head.

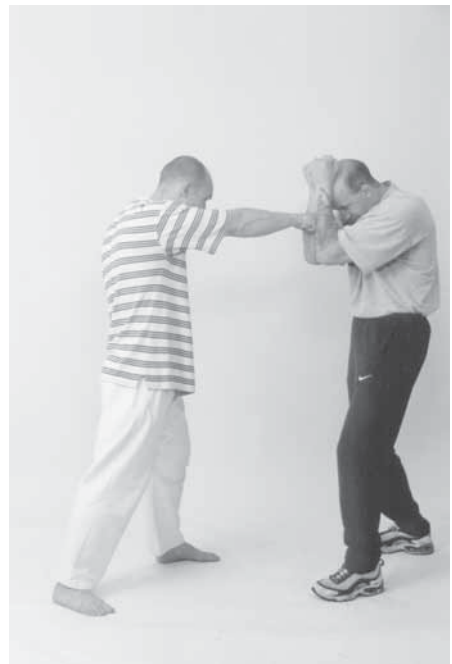
Lead Hand Parry

2. REVERSE HAND PARRY: As the jab comes towards your face parry it across to your left with the palm of your right hand.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
Counter with a left jab, hook or uppercut, according to the opening in the opponent's defence.


Reverse Hand Parry

3. GUARD BLOCK: As the jab comes towards your face or body, close your guard by touching left hand and right hand, elbow to elbow in front of your own face and body taking the force of the blow on your arms.



COUNTER ATTACKS: Counter with any punch, but preferably the left jab or right cross for safety, speed and accessibility.

4. LEFT SHOULDER BLOCK:
As the jab comes towards your face lift your left shoulder, high, simultaneously rolling the left side of your upper body inwards, parrying the left jab with the shoulder.

5. THE DUCK: Bend at the knees so that you drop underneath the attacking jab, be sure not to bend at the torso, this could prove dangerous to you due to loss of visibility.

COUNTER ATTACKS: It is only effectively possible to counter with low body shots, the left jab, right cross and left hook being most accessible.

6. THE SLIP: The slip may be employed to the left or to the right. As the jab comes towards your face slip it by moving your head inside the jab, to your right, or outside the jab, to your left.

COUNTER ATTACKS: Right slip: Counter with a left jab, uppercut or hook (body or head) or a right hook (body or head). Left slip: Counter with a right cross or hook (body or head) or a left jab, hook or uppercut (body or head). Counter attacks that compliment the slip may and should be executed simultaneously with the slip, hitting the opponent as he is moving in with his attack.

7. LAY BACK: As the jab comes towards your face move backwards and out of the punches range by transferring your weight from the lead left leg (whilst in orthodox stance) to the back right leg, bending it enough to take you out of range.

COUNTER ATTACKS: Counter with a left jab, hook or uppercut, either simultaneously with the 'lay back' or as the opponent is retracting the jab. You may also counter attack with a right cross or hook, wait until the opponent is retracting the jab before you launch your counter, transfer the weight back on to the front leg so that you are back in orthodox stance and counter with the chosen blow.

8. STEP BACK:
As the jab comes towards your face step slightly backwards with the right rear leg, just enough to take you out of the jab's range.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
As with the lay back, the step back counters may be employed simultaneously with the step back, catching the attacker as he moves in, or after, when the opponent is extracting the jab. Be sure to move back to orthodox stance as you throw your chosen counter. Left jab/hook/uppercut and right cross/hook are all worthy contenders for counter attack after the step back evasion.

The defences employed for the neutralisation of the jab are, in the main, a facsimile for those used to block/evade the other punches (cross, uppercut, hook), where they are the same please refer to the forgoing for the greater details and mechanics of the moves.

DEFENCE AGAINST THE RIGHT CROSS:
Being a straight punch the right cross defences are a facsimile to the left jab defences, where differences do occur I shall digress.

LEAD HAND PARRY:
As the jab comes towards your face parry it across to your right with the palm of the left lead hand, do not over commit the parry in case the 'cross' is a ploy/feint.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
You may counter attack with a right cross to the opponent's face over the top of the attacker's extended right arm, or with a right cross to the body under the attacker's extended right arm. If you are sharp you may throw a counter jab with the parrying hand.

REVERSE HAND PARRY:
As the cross comes towards your face parry it across to your left with the palm of your right hand, simultaneously move your head and shoulders to your right and away from the force of the blow.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
You may counter with a left jab (body or head) or a left hook/ uppercut to the body.

GUARD BLOCK:
As the cross comes towards your face or body close the guard by touching left hand to right hand, elbow to elbow in front of your face and body, taking the force of the blow on your arms.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
You may counter with any punch, but preferably the left jab or right cross, for safety, speed and accessibility.

LEFT SHOULDER BLOCK:
As the cross comes towards your face lift your left shoulder high, simultaneously rolling your upper body inwards, parrying the cross with your left shoulder.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
Counter with a left jab or hook, over the opponent's extended right arm to the head, under his arm when countering to the body. Right uppercut is also accessible.

THE DUCK:
Bend at the knees so that you drop underneath the cross. be sure not to bend at the torso.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
It is only effectively possible to counter, from this position, with low body shots. The left jab, right cross and right hook being most accessible.

THE SLIP:
The 'slip' may be employed to the right or the left of the cross. When employing the slip to your left your movement should be more extreme than when slipping to your right, due to the fact that the cross is coming from the right.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
Right slip: Counter with a left jab/uppercut/hook or a right hook (body or head). Left slip: Counter with a right cross/hook or left jab/hook/uppercut (body or head).

Counter attacks that compliment the slip may and should be executed simultaneously with the slip, catching the opponent as he moves in with his attack.

LAY BACK:
As the cross comes towards your face move backwards, out of the punches range by transferring the weight from the lead left leg to the back right leg, bending it just enough to take you out of the punches range.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
You may counter attack with a left jab/hook, which should be employed simultaneously with your lay back, catching the opponent as he moves in to attack, or with a right cross/hook as the opponent retracts the right cross. Be sure to retain the orthodox stance before you throw the right hand as a counter.

STEP BACK:
As the cross comes towards your face step slightly backwards with your right rear leg, taking you just outside of the punches range.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
As with the lay back the step back counter attacks may be applied as you step back and away from the opponent's cross or as the cross is being retracted.

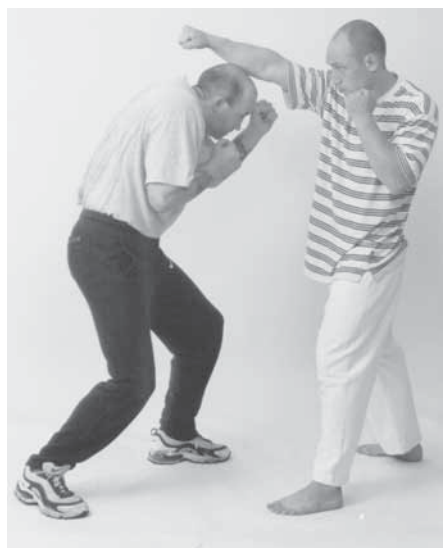
OPEN HAND THRUST:
As soon as the opponent initiates the right cross punch out with your lead left hand and thrust it in to the bend on the opponent's punching arm (between the biceps and the fore arm) stopping the cross in its tracks.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
Ideally, from this position, counter attack with a right cross or hook to the opponent's head or body.

DEFENCE AND COUNTER ATTACKS AGAINST 'HOOKS'. The most effective defences against the hooking punch are evasive defences as opposed to blocks.

BOB AND WEAVE:
(left or right) Against a right hook, bob below the punch as it comes towards your head, weave to your left and underneath it.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
After weaving underneath the punch, counter attack with a left jab or hook to the opponent's body or head. Against the left hook: bob below the punch as it comes towards your head, weave to your right and underneath it.



COUNTER ATTACKS:
After weaving underneath the punch, counter attack with a right cross, hook or uppercut (body or head). If you aim the right uppercut counter to the opponent's head you will need to direct the blow underneath the opponent's extended left arm.

The guard block, duck, lay back, step back and open hand thrust defences, formerly described, (and their counter attacks) may all, also be successfully used in defence of the hooking punch with the exact facsimile as the jab or cross.

DEFENCE AND COUNTER ATTACKS AGAINST THE UPPERCUT:
There are only one or two successful and worth while defences against this devious punch.

1. GUARD BLOCK:
As the punch comes towards your head or body close your guard by touching left hand to right hand, elbow to elbow, in front of your face and body, taking the force of the blow on your arms.

COUNTER ATTACKS:
You may counter with any punch, but preferably the left jab or right cross for safety, speed and accessibility. Due to the close proximity of the attacking uppercut your chosen counter attacks must, out of necessity, be short range punches.

NOTE: *WITH ALL OF THE FOREGOING COUNTER ATTACKS, IF THE OPENING IN THE OPPONENT'S ARMOURY ALLOWS, THROW A COMBINATION OF PUNCHES TO FOLLOW THE INITIALLY CHOSEN COUNTER ATTACK, AS OUTLINED IN CHAPT. 11 COMBINATIONS*.

The more that you work with the foregoing techniques the more familiar, effective and instinctive they will become. You will discover the defences and counter attacks that suit you best as an individual, tailoring them to your needs. Feel free to experiment and develop your own variations of those previously outlined, as long as they work and do not open up your vulnerability.

Practice the blocks and counter attacks in a controlled environment before testing them (and yourself) out for 'real'. The controlled practice of all techniques is an important part of confidence building.

Chapter Thirteen

Hand Sparring

This is where you road test all of the techniques that you have been (or should have been) practising so diligently. BEWARE!! When it comes to free sparring don not rush in. Walk before you try to run. I have witnessed many good potential punchers receive decimated egos because they attempted 'too much too soon'. Pyramid your sparring, start at the bottom with light sparring or even restricted sparring (a detailed explanation of the various sparring methods can be found further into the chapter).

As your confidence and skill increases so should the severity of your sparring, until you progress to 'full contact' sparring wearing 16 oz boxing gloves. If you jump in to the deep end right from the start it is likely that your progress will be slow, believe me, if you think you are going to get trounced every time you make a mistake (which is probable in full contact sparring) you will not take any chances and try out new techniques, relying up on the moves that you know will work for you. So, better to start off light. When you do become proficient enough to enter the 'full contact' arena do not discard 'light' or 'restricted sparring. As an advanced player there is still much to be gained from their practice and always some thing to learn.

There are 4 different types of hand sparring (or boxing).
1. Pre-set sparring.
2. Restricted sparring.
3. Light skill sparring.
4. Heavy sparring.

Be you a beginner or an advanced player, all four should be practised regularly.

PRE-SET SPARRING:
This is the foundation of advanced technique. All of the punches, defences and counter attacks described in the former chapters may be practised and perfected in pre-set sparring.

Pre-set is practised with a partner who lightly attacks with a pre chosen punch, jab, cross etc. As the defender you evade or block the said punch and counter attack with another. For instance, your opponent and your self face off in the pre described 45 degree stance (orthodox or south paw). The attacker attacks with a left jab, as the jab comes towards your face execute a left, lead hand parry to deflect the jab, counter attack with a right cross counter to the opponent's head (with control).

Reverse the play, you attack with a left jab whilst your opponent defends and counter attacks. This should be practised with multifarious attacks, defences and counter attacks until competence is formed and confidence gained.

Once the former and latter are in residence the ferocity of the pre-set practice should increase until the attacker is aiming a full contact blow, hitting the defender if he fails to block or evade.

The counter attacks, however should always be controlled because they are not defended against.

Any attack, block and counter attack may be employed in pre-set sparring, as long as the chosen techniques are agreed upon before hand.

Again, as confidence and ability grows, the defender may and should try to add lib his defence and counter attacks, this will develop automatic reaction.

Pre-set sparring is a good confidence builder, it also develops competence to excellence in attack, defence and counter attack

whilst greatly enhancing distancing. It is a gentle introduction to sparring for the beginner and an excellent way for the advanced player to perfect senior moves.

RESTRICTED SPARRING:
Restricted sparring may be practised light or heavy, fast or slow, it is, as its title suggests, restricted. This may mean restricted to fighting with only one punch, ie. a left jab, or a right cross. For instance, if the fighters are restricted to a left jab, when they spar that is the only attacking tool they may use. You may also restrict the fighting to 'light' where heavy contact is disallowed or paradoxical, 'heavy' where the participants may strike each other as hard as they wish. This genre of restriction extends itself to all of the punches on the curriculum.

Another form of restriction is to limit one partner to a left jab whilst his opponent may only block and counter attack, again this 'restriction' may be lent to any of the attacks and not only the jab.

Restricted sparring is, in effect, isolating a chosen technique for improvement. If your jab is below standard, for instance, restricted 'jab' sparring will quickly bring it up to scratch.

LIGHT SKILL SPARRING:
Any thing goes here as far as techniques are concerned, with only the exception of heavy contact. Any thing and every thing may be practised in the full knowledge that no matter what mistakes you or your opponent might make, you will not be penalised for it with a heavy blow or counter blow.

Light sparring is the most enjoyable of all sparring methods because the sky is the limit and bloody noses are a rarity. If you want to try that 'left jab, left hook' combination that Joe Louis favoured or the triple left hook famed by 'Sugar ray', then by all means do so, if it goes drastically wrong, nothing is lost (except perhaps the illusion that you thought it would be easy).

Light sparring is where great technique is formulated and nurtured, perhaps thrown a thousand times before perfection is gained, and confidence is built enough to transport you in to the 'full contact arena'. It also allows hours of uninjured practice.

HEAVY SPARRING:
"The proof of pudding is in the eating"

Heavy gloves (12-16 oz) should be worn for protection whilst engaging in heavy sparring. Whilst pre-set, restricted and light sparring are important and necessary they are of little use with out the additive of 'heavy' all out boxing sparring. You can sit in a learner car and fiddle with the controls for as long as you like, you can drive around a deserted air field or industrial estate until you are blue in the face, and it all helps, but, until you've taken the car out into heavy traffic, you haven't driven.

Getting in to the heavy traffic of all out sparring can be very daunting, but it needs to be done. It is here that you try the practised techniques out on an opponent who is doing like wise, where mistakes may and will be heavily penalised.

Born here is the realisation that, what you get away with in light sparring may not be tolerated in heavy, mistakes can and will prove to be painful. Heavy sparring is the 'pressure test' of technique and character.

This is where the jab (left or right) comes in to its own and, certainly in your first few encounters, you dare not risk trying any thing else.

The straight jab and cross are the bread and butter punches of heavy sparring, much confidence must be sought before trying out the closer range hooks and uppercuts.

'Bottle' is also heavily tested in this uncomfortable arena, blows that get through your defences can be brutal, disorientation is probable, unconsciousness possible. If you do 'catch a good one' and your legs want to give way to gravity it is best not to give in and stop (unless it is absolutely necessary). You may do one of 3 things (4 if you wish to consider 'run for your life' as an option) if things get a little too much.

1. COVER UP:
Tuck your chin deeply in to your chest, lift your shoulders high and close your guard around your face and body as tightly as possible. Take the brunt of the attacking blows on your guard until it is possible to move out of the line of fire, or are able to counter attack, or attack back.

2. GRAB AND HOLD:
Move in close to you opponent and grab him, tuck your face in as close to his body as possible, this will make it awkward for him to hit you with any degree of force. Hold on to him until you are capable of attacking/counter attacking, or of moving out of his punching range.

MOVE:
Use sharp footwork (as described in Chapter 7. Footwork) to evade and keep out of the opponent's punching range until orientation returns and you are capable of fighting back.

Remember, if realism is to be sought heavy sparring should be a regular part of your training schedule.

It is advised by the author to wear protective equipment in light and heavy sparring. 16oz gloves, head gear and gum shield, (box, shin guard, wrist guard, body protector, crash helmet, knife/ bullet proof vest, suit of armour, steel toe capped shoes etc. etc. etc; only joking).

Chapter Fourteen

Hands Versus Feet

J. F. Gilby, in his book '*World Wrestling and Western Boxing*' said that a puncher will always beat a kicker. In the main I believe this to be true, though it takes a lot of working at.

A dominant kicker will destroy any player of any genre if the said player allows the kicker 'space'. It's all about distancing. If you allow the kicker kicking distance he is in his element, you must close him down by moving inside his kicking range, close enough for you to employ punching techniques. The danger involved in 'closing' the kicker down is getting caught doing so, that is walking on to a kick. This can be very damaging because the power of the said kick is doubled when you move forward, on to it. Powerful kickers like David Mears, ex world Martial arts champion who spent three years in Thailand on a Thai boxing camp, will destroy you with one kick if you allow him space. It is better, therefore, to allow the kicker to kick, block or evade the kick and then move inside his kicking range as he retracts the kick, most kickers drop their guard when executing a kicking technique leaving their heads vulnerable to counter attacks.

Turning kicks, ie. round house, back round house etc. are a lot easier to break down than straight kicks, which may penetrate even the tightest guard.

I shall list the most popular kicks, demonstrating how best to break them down.

DEFENCES AGAINST THE FRONT KICK; ELBOW BLOCK:
A strong front kicker can be very dangerous if not quickly dissuaded. As soon as you realise that the opponent is keen to employ the front kick employ the elbow block by striking the shin of the opponent's kicking leg with your left lead elbow. As the kick comes towards your body drop the lead elbow, whilst still retaining the guard, on to the opponent's shin (see illus). Due to the pain inflicting qualities of this block, once is usually enough to persuade the opponent not to use the kick again.

Counter with a right cross, hook or uppercut.

GEDANBARI:
From orthodox stance block the attacking right leg to the inside of the opponent's calf with the outside of your left wrist, by striking in a downward motion. Simultaneously move your right foot around to your right (be sure, on landing to retain your 45 degree front stance). This will block and deflect the kick away from you.

Counter with a right cross/ hook or uppercut (body or head) Gedanbari to the opponent's left front kick is an almost direct facsimile to blocking the right front kick, the deviance being the fact that you block the opponent's attacking leg on the outside of the shin as opposed to the left side, after the leg has been deflected the opponent will land facing away from you as opposed to facing to you.

SOTOBARI:
This is the opposite of gedanbari, blocking with the inside of the wrist as opposed to the outside.

From orthodox stance, block the attacking right leg on the outside of the calf muscle with the inside of the left wrist by striking in a downward motion, simultaneously move your right foot across, behind and to your own left. As the kick is deflected away from you move your left leg forward and to your left to retain the 45 degree front stance.

Counter attack with a right cross or hook (body or head).

Sotobari to the opponent's left front kick is almost a direct facsimile to blocking the right front kick, the deviance being that the block strikes the inside of the attacking leg as opposed to the outside, after the opponent's leg has been deflected he will land facing towards you as opposed to away.

Counter attack with a right cross, hook or uppercut (body or head).

CLOSE DOWN:
In theory the 'close down' is simple, as the opponent initiates his front kick by raising the knee of the attacking leg, move forward and attack with any given punch, catching him mid way through his technique. In practice it is not so simple, demanding perception, excellent timing and 'guts'. As formerly mentioned, moving on to a straight kick can prove to be very painful.

An experienced kicker like Ian McCranor commonwealth silver medallist (or Peter Consterdine who kicks Elephants to death with his feet) who reads your intentions may use the knee lift to 'draw' you in, on to an entirely different technique, so beware. It would be wise to test the opponent out by pretending to move in as he lifts his knee to see if it is a 'drawing' ploy.

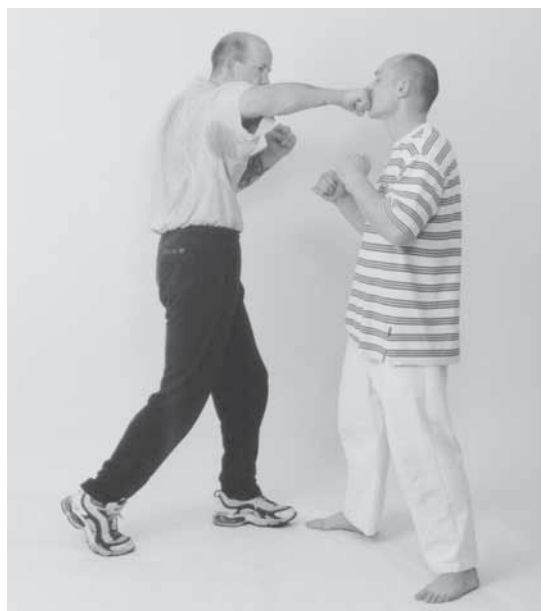
LAY BACK:
Another seemingly simple defence that holds below its simplistic shell a demand for good distancing, timing and courage, for again you will be moving forward at a fast rate to employ your chosen counter attack.

As the opponent's front kick comes towards you move backwards and out of range by transferring your weight from the lead left leg to the rear right leg, bending the back leg enough to take you out of the kicks range. If this isn't enough you may slide back by moving your right leg a step backwards, followed by your left. Do not move so far back that you are out of range to employ a counter attack.

As the kick is being retracted move quickly forward and counter attack with any punch, preferably a right cross or hook (body or head). Again, be careful that the front kick is not a ploy/feign to draw you on to another technique.

Lay back . . .

Right cross counter attack



If and when the opening in the opponent's guard allows throw a combination of punches to follow the initially chosen counter attack.

SPINNING BACK KICK (STRAIGHT):
Probably the most powerful of all kicking techniques, relegated, thankfully to the realms of the 'advanced'.

I only see two methods of defence worth pursuing, the 'lay back/ step back' and the 'close down'. The former being the most recommended.

LAY BACK/STEP BACK:
This is the only 'safe' method of deploying this cripple shooting kick, As is formerly described the lay back entails laying back, just outside the range of the attack and moving in with your counter attack as the kick is being retracted.

CLOSE DOWN:
As described, foregoingly, the close down demands timing, distancing and courage (in bagfuls), his is especially so with the back kick which does not suffer mistakes gladly.

Timing is of the essence, as the kicker begins his initial turn, move smartly forward with your chosen technique, striking before they can extend.

THE SIDE KICK:
This can be a dangerous kick if applied by the advanced kicker, generally the side kick is 'pushy' and not what I would deem as dangerous, certainly when dealing with the masses.

Where the defences are the same as those formerly described please refer back for a more detailed description.

GEDANBARI:
This block may be used successfully to divert the side kick, it should be used in a direct facsimile to blocking the front kick. Counter attack with any right hand punch when blocking with the

left hand, any left hand punch when blocking with the right hand. Follow with a combination of punches if the opening allows.

SOTOBARI:
Used to divert the side kick in a direct facsimile to blocking the front kick. Counter attack with any right hand punch, when blocking with the left hand, any left hand punch when blocking with the right.

LAY BACK:
As formerly described, lay back out side of the kicks range, as the attacker retracts the kick move smartly in with your chosen counter attack, preferably with a right cross or hook, followed where applicable, with a combination of punches.

GUARD BLOCK:
If the opponent is not particularly powerful it is possible to absorb the side kick on your guard. As you take the force of the blow lean forward slightly to avoid being pushed backwards and out of countering range. Counter with any punch, preferably a right cross or hook, combinations, again if the opening allows.

CLOSE DOWN:
This may be used against all kicks, the side kick being no exception. Try to move in as early as possible, preferably in the 'knee lift' stage of the kick. Any counter attack may be employed, combinations if and when possible.

TURNING KICKS:
This encompasses round house, back round house, spinning back round house and crescent kicks.

I rarely make an effort to block these type of kick, preferring to absorb them on a tight guard then counter attack heavily as the kicker retracts his leg, with the exception of the spinning back round house which is often too powerful to absorb. 'Lay back', 'step back' or 'close down' are the recommended defences against this kick.

ROUND HOUSE KICK: (body)
The left and right round house kick may be absorbed the arms employing the aforementioned 'guard block'. Counter attack with a right cross or hook as the kick is retracting.

LEFT GUARD BLOCK:
As the left round house kick comes towards your body, keep your guard tight and turn it and your torso to your left, meeting and absorbing the oncoming kick on your arms. From this position counter attack immediately, as the kick is retracting, with a left hook. Follow with a combination, if possible.

'Close down' and 'lay back/step back' defences may also be effectively used against the left round house kick.

RIGHT GUARD BLOCK:
As the right leg round house kick comes towards your body, keep your guard tight, turn it and your torso to your right meeting and absorbing the oncoming kick on your arms. From this position counter immediately with a right cross or hook as the opponent retracts the kick. Follow with a combination if the opening allows.

FACE ROUND HOUSE: (Front and rear leg)
Face height round house kicks may be blocked and evaded in exactly the same manner as the body round house kick utilising the 'guard block', left and right guard block', 'close down' and 'lay back/step back'. Counter attacks to these defences are dictated by the opening left in the opponent's guard when his chosen kick is employed. In addition to the these defences the face round house (front leg or back) may be blocked with a left or right 'Palm block'.

PALM BLOCK:
As the right leg round house comes towards your face, strike your right hand to your left, across the front of your face, blocking the kick with the palm of hand on the lower ankle of the opponent's attacking leg (back of the heel, if blocking a back round house). Counter attack with a left jab, hook or uppercut (body or head) followed by a combination, if applicable.

The left round house is blocked in the same manner, using the right hand to counter attack as opposed to the left. The best method of practising the foregoing defences and counter attacks is to practice them in pre-set and restricted sparring, restricting one partner to the use of only hand techniques and the other partner to the use of only kicking techniques.

In time and with much practice you will learn to mix and intermingle the aforementioned defences and counters, possibly spawning some new ones of your own. For greater detail on kicking techniques please refer to *Real Kicking*.

Chapter Fifteen

Hands Versus Grappling

Whilst J. F. Gilby (world wrestling and western boxing) stated that 'a puncher will always beat a kicker' he also finished the statement by saying that 'a grappler will always beat a puncher', a reckoning, Mr Gilby explains, derived from his empirical survey of fighters and fighting systems from all around the world. Again, in the main, I feel compelled to agree with him, though I fear that his statement does rely up on contributing factors.

When talking about the grappler beating the puncher (or kicker) it is fair to say that we are not just talking about some one who 'likes a bit of a wrestle' we are talking about a 'blood and snot' grappler who understands enough about the mechanics of punching to manipulate the pugilist's weaknesses, we are also presuming that the puncher has so little understanding of grappling that he will automatically lose if enters the wrestlers arena. If he hasn't any wrestling knowledge, he should have, or he should expect to lose, because a veteran grappler will be prepared to 'take a few' to gain grappling distance.

Whilst this is out of the purlieus of this text it is some thing we all should think about. It is true that the grappler is the most dangerous of all adversaries, but he also has weaknesses that the pugilist may engineer and manipulate.

The key to fighting this omnipotent warrior is not to allow him a 'grip', once you do (if you do) you'll be at his mercy. Grappling range is quite unique. With kicking and punching range you can

come in and out of it at will, once in grappling range you are usually there until the culmination of the fight.

As detailed in Chapter 17 - Footwork, and in the 'restricted sparring' section of Chapter 13. Hand sparring, footwork is an imperative part of the fighting jigsaw, this is even more so when facing the grappler if a safe distance is to be kept between you and he. Also, long range punches should be employed to keep the grappler at bay, more specifically the 'straight' long range punches. 'Hit and move' is the order of the day if grappling distance is to be avoided.

If your opponent does get closer to you than is desired short range uppercuts and hooks should be introduced, again with the onus up on hitting and moving. Try not to move backwards, move to the side and around, clock wise and anti clock wise, though not too often in the same direction, if you do the grappler will be able to predict your movements and 'close you down'.

Grapplers do not, traditionally practise punching techniques, this reflects in their half mast and open 'guard' deeming them easy targets for the puncher, they are, however, notoriously tough, well used to pain and more than willing to take a few punches from you to bridge the gap, believing that they will 'win when in'.

Combinations should be kept to a minimum, 2, 3, 4 punches at the very most, a larger combination will see you rooted to one spot for too long, enough for the grappler to get a grip.
Uppercuts are prime punches for attacking the grappler who gets too close, punched underneath his arm/s as he stretches them out to get a grip on your attire, again, hit and move.

The gap between you and your wrestling adversary should, for your own safety, never shorten. Due to the fact that the grappler is seeking grappling range, he will be constantly moving forwards and towards you, his techniques can not be utilised until he gets

a 'grip'. When he does move towards you strike out at him and then move away, do so for the duration of the fight. It is also good form to punch, if and when possible, at the grapplers fingers, if you can break them he can't use them.

Don't be disheartened if the adversary does not acknowledge or appear to weaken at or to your blows, good fighters discipline themselves not to show any signs of weakness or pain, this is a psychological tactic aimed at disheartening the weaker willed opponent (I do it all the time). Common sense will tell you that no man can take sever blows for ever, work away at your adversary like a corrosive, eventually he will erode.

The grapplers greatest asset out side of grappling range (probably his only asset) is 'intimidation'. He will just keep on coming, trying to wear down your stamina, and consequently your 'will', once that is beaten, so are you.

Restricted sparring with a partner is the best method of practising these methods. One partner is restricted to only punching techniques whilst the other is restricted to only grappling.

Start off lightly, build up until you are going 'all out' with the grappler doing every thing with in his power to grab you and you doing every thing within your power to stop him (both inside the bounds of the enforced restrictions). Regular practice of the forgoing will enlighten the puncher to the enormity of the task before him, practice makes perfect.

When practising restricted sparring, as formerly described, the puncher should wear 16 oz boxing gloves for safety.

Although it is not within the realms of this text I would suggest to the reader that he acquire a basic knowledge of grappling techniques, just in case (or read my book *Real Grappling*).

Chapter Sixteen

Cheeky Shots

If I have a forte the 'cheeky shot' is it. You may wish to label it differently, 'cheap shot' perhaps, the tag matters not, as long as they are effective, which they are.

The cheeky shot is hitting the opponent when he isn't ready or when his attention is or has been diverted.

Whilst in the dojo you may see these tactics as a little 'ungentlemanly', on the 'pavement arena' they are the norm, many battles are won and lost on the strengths and weaknesses of the 'cheeky shot'.

In this chapter I shall list my own favourites, but, be sure there are many more just waiting to be invented by the ingenious fighter who wants or needs an edge.

Samuri, great boxers, war mongers and gangsters through out history used the cheeky shot syndrome to fool their foe and bring them to defeat, as modern day gladiators, martial artists, pugilists or just 'bloody' fighters, I do not see why we should be any different.

The following techniques may be used in the dojo/gym or adapted to the 'street'.

EYE DISTRACTION:
Part way through the fight, slightly lower your guard and stare, left or right, behind your opponent as though distracted by some

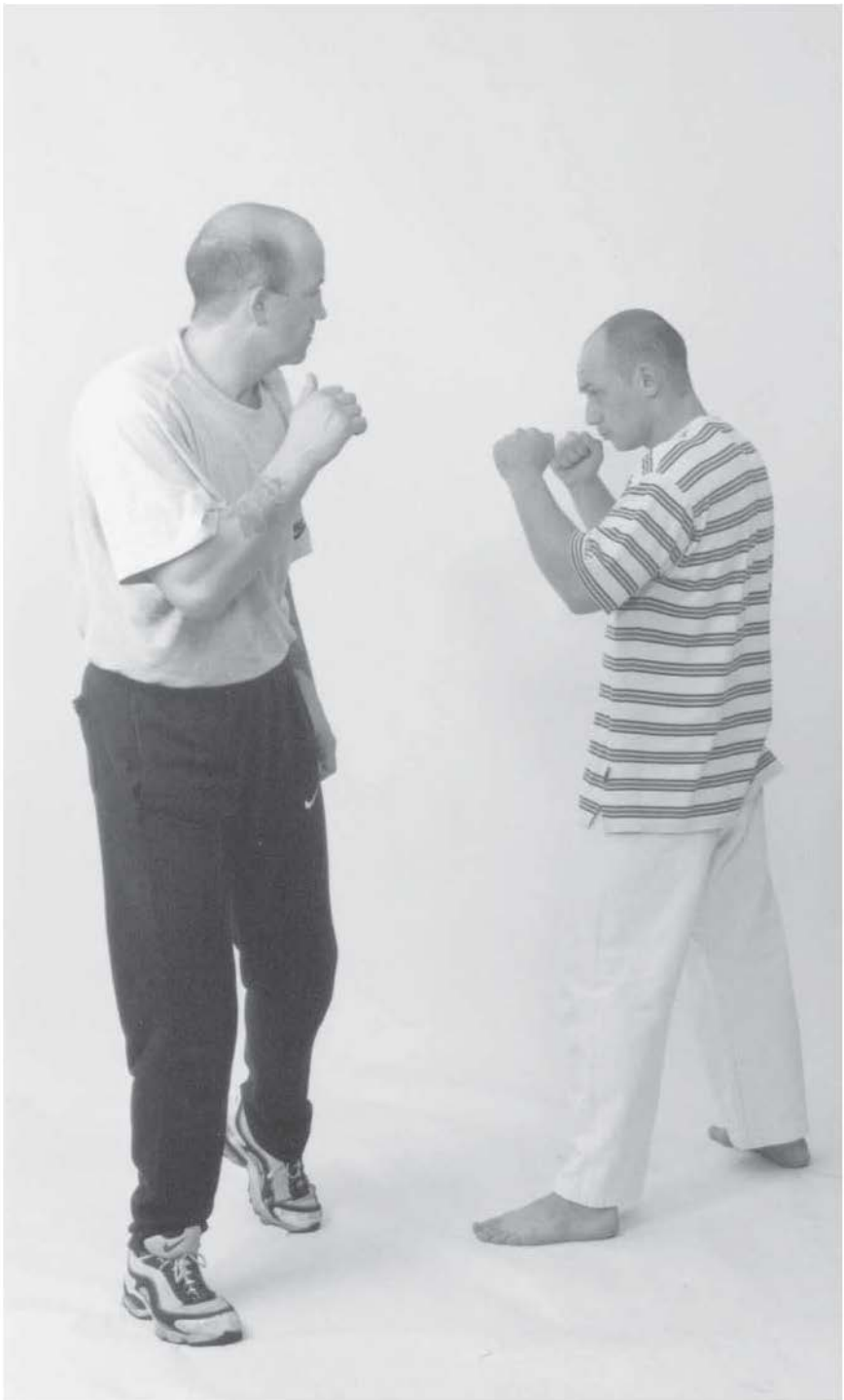
body (this works especially well if you are the instructor). More often than not your opponent will drop his own guard and follow your gaze. When he does, hit him (cheeky, hey ?).

TIRED PLOY:
Pretend to be tired by feigning exhaustion, whilst the opponent's attention is drawn to your dilemma (supposed) hit him.

LEG SLAP:
Mid way through the fight slap your left lead leg with your left hand, bounce from the slap, which will momentarily distract the opponent, in to a sharp left jab.

FINGER POINTING TO THE MOON:
From your guard position lift your left lead hand (or right if you wish to attack with the right hand) high and to your left. As soon as the opponent's eyes focus on the hand whip it in to a left jab (right cross, if using the right hand) directed in to the opponent's face.

SLOW STEP:
Mid way through the fight suddenly drop your guard and relax, step to your left, left leg crossing right (right crossing left if you wish to move the opposite way). Mid way through the step, as the legs cross, lash out with a fast left jab (right cross, if attacking with the right hand, moving to your right). This often catches the opponent 'clean' because he doesn't expect you to attack whilst you are stepping.



INSTEP ADJUSTMENT:
Momentarily stop sparring to adjust or straighten your 'gi' (Karate uniform) or shin protectors. As you bend to do so and the opponent's eyes follow your decent, quickly lash out with a jab or a cross.

In Dojo sparring I use the foregoing ploys as a bit of fun, paradoxically, I have also used them in 'live' scenarios when 'fun' was not on the agenda. If perfected they can mean the difference between winning and losing.

Chapter Seventeen

The Double Hip

By Peter Consterdine 7th Dan

It was probably some four years or so after starting Karate that I actually learned how to punch with power. The revelation came, and I can only describe it as that, when I changed styles and took up Shukokai Karate. The Shukokai we practised then was really the product of one man, Shigeru Kimura Sensei, a Japanese who was not constrained mentally from questioning the effectiveness of traditional teaching.

By studying other sports and with the appliance of physics he had developed a basis of movement, speed, explosiveness and power in punches and kicks that can only be described as awesome. Although he was eventually to alter the techniques, for me the peak of power I was able to obtain was never better than that derived from these original techniques.

The main technique was, for me, the 'Double Hip'. It is this movement with its whipping action similar to throwing rather than punching that gives a technique its power. Every Karate man, Boxer, or Martial Artist who punches is taught to turn their hip into the punch, but unfortunately at the same time as the hand and this is where the problem arises. Also they are taught to pull back with the opposite side of the body, effectively rotating the body around a central pivot going through the head and out the backside.

In simple physics terms this means that if the axis is fixed the pullback gives as much power going backwards as it does to the punch going forwards. Try throwing a stone and keep the arm and hip together with no split between the two - it wouldn't reach the end of a small room! What in fact happens when you throw something is that the hip is whipped backwards and then forwards whilst leaving the arm behind to recoil, this recoil occurring in the shoulder. This split between the hip and arm with the double action is the first part of the double hip technique for punching. What also has to happen is that the pivot point must change from the central axis centred through the body to a 'door hinge' at the point of the leading hip. When the double hip occurs it must also involve a movement of body weight with the centre of balance shifting from between the two feet to being over the lead leg. The lead hip is then the pivot around which the body weight travels forward whipping that weight through the recoil in the shoulder and eventually through the arm.

The object is, in as natural a way as possible, to put all the body weight at the end of the fist and whilst it seems complicated the action is a very natural one and one that we would instinctively incline to if we had to project a heavy object ballistically. You'll see the same action in a shotput, javelin, tennis serve and golf stroke.

Relaxation is the key to success as any degree of tension restricts the recoil at the shoulder point and makes the double hip movement too mechanical losing the necessary flow. The success of the technique in a Self Defence role is that tremendous impact can be delivered at close ranges, particularly to the body, and most importantly from a variety of relaxed hand positions. It isn't necessary to raise the hands to punch and often, in fact, it is stronger when a punch is delivered from belt level as distinct from shoulder level due to the relaxed nature of the arm. At all times the arm must piston alongside the ribs with no lateral elbow movement to shed power or telegraph the punch.

The back leg must be allowed to come forward. The stance you should be in would be relaxed and again non-threatening and this assists the power as it prevents the rear leg being too stiff and rooted to the ground. Often a long traditional stance is a hindrance to delivering power as mistakenly the rear leg is held in its position and by doing so restricts the movement of the hips and body weight going forward. The power of the punch is actually derived from the pulling action of the front leg and not any pushing from the rear. Power for both punching and kicking is contained within the body's mid-section, but generations of punchers have mentally deceived themselves that the arms and shoulders are where the power is generated. These are simply transmission points through which the body's main power, its weight, is transmitted and that transmission is derived from the fast whipping action of the double hip around the lead hip door hinge. Few people would be able to withstand the impact from a correctly delivered body shot and the same technique with a faster hand action and shortened hip is equally as effective on the jawline.

It is impossible to obtain the true feeling from the text or photographs as to the power developed over such distances, but hopefully you should derive some impression as to the impact produced.

Chapter Eighteen

Training Equipment

Punching, as with all forms of combat, is an apprenticeship. As with all apprenticeships 'tools' are needed to enhance and sharpen the sought after skill. The 'tools' that I recommend for 'hand' training are as follows:

FOCUS PADS (HOOK AND JAB) :
Potentate amongst training aids are the focus pads. Excellent for the development of accuracy, power, distancing and multi angled punching.

Each pad is centred by a 1+" (diam) spot that acts as the target area. Any thing but a direct hit on the spot will look, feel and sound wrong. An accurate shot will feel solid and emit a definite 'thwack' letting you know that you are on target.

The focus pads are excellent for any one wishing to develop a K.O. punch.

It is necessary to have a partner when practising the pads. He should put one pad on each hand and turn them to meet the angle of your desired punch.

Spot facing inwards for hook punches, downwards for uppercuts and forwards for straight punches.

The person punching the pads should lead with his left leg (right if south paw) punching the pads with his left hand to his partners left hand, and his right hand to his partners right. The puncher

should employ a guard in normal practice, no guard in 'line up' practice.

The holder should vary the height and distance (from the puncher) of the pads to promote variety.

As the puncher hits the pads he should exhale through his nose or mouth, this will regulate the breathing, feed the working muscles with oxygen and assist 'Kime' (body focus).

Once the puncher becomes familiar with hitting the pads and the holder with holding them correctly, the holder may dictate and control the play by shouting out punches or combinations of punches for the puncher to execute, 'jab, cross' 'right hook, left hook' etc. then change the angle of the pads to receive the designated strikes.

The experienced puncher may attempt more advanced combinations, again the holder must move the pads in time with the strikes.

The holder should not stay in the same position all of the time, he should move forcing the puncher to utilise good footwork. Each time the puncher finishes his attack upon the pads the holder should move to a different position.

TOP AND BOTTOM BALL:
Suspended in mid air, via a length of elastic from the ceiling to the floor (some times called the 'floor to ceiling ball') the top and bottom emerges as a wonderful training implement that is excellent for the development of timing and distancing. Some argue that the top and bottom is the closest one can get to a 'live' opponent. I am not inclined to disagree. It is also a hugely enjoyable method of practice.

It may be used to practice jabs, crosses, hooks and, to the advanced player, uppercuts. A very versatile training aid. The height (and thus speed) of the ball can be altered by tightening or loosening the straps above and below the ball.

In practice, after you have hit the ball, it will, if you are not vigilant, hit you back on its return or 'bounce back'. This adds to the realism of the practice immeasurably.

THE PUNCH BAG:
Probably the oldest method of practice known to fighting man. Despite its ancient heritage it is still the finest power developing instrument on the market. Also known to be excellent for the development of good technique, stamina and combination punching. Due to the mass of the punch bag accuracy development is not greatly evolved here, though every thing else is.

The greatest form of practice, without a doubt, is to be had with the 'live' partner (dead ones just don't respond the same) with whom you can communicate, learn and progress.

When working with a partner, tell each other when a technique feels right, wrong, realistic, unrealistic, powerful, weak etc. etc. To talk to each other is to learn from each other.

Epilogue

When the time comes and you find your self facing a confrontational situation, punching will be the most immediate, accessible and effective tool that is naturally available to you.

Having faced over 300 opponents in 'live' situations, believe me, I know, and not because I cannot or do not kick/grapple, I can (and occasionally do) employ kicking and grappling range in the street scenario, though it is rare.

Good hand techniques can and will neutralise/destroy an adversary quickly and clinically. Excellent 'hands' will safely vehicle you through any environment in any country of the world, safe in the knowledge that you are protected. Protected by something that you carry with you everywhere, that is legal in any environment, and that also has a thousand other uses besides 'protection'.

THE THROWS & TAKE-DOWNS OF JUDO

GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

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Important note

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

About the author

Geoff Thompson has written over 20 books and is known worldwide for his bestselling autobiography, *Watch My Back*, about his nine years working as a nightclub doorman. He currently has a quarter of a million books in print. He holds the rank of 6th Dan black belt in Japanese karate, 1st Dan in judo and is also qualified to senior instructor level in various other forms of wrestling and martial arts. He has several scripts for stage and screen in development with Destiny Films.

He has published articles for *GQ* magazine, and has also been featured in *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Arena*, *Front* and *Loaded* magazines, and has appeared many times on mainstream television. Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine.

Geoff was trained in judo by British judo champion Wayne Lakin and Olympic silver medallist Neil Adams OBE; he spent 18 months as a full-time judo student in Neil Adams' international class in Coventry, England. He qualified as a black belt with the BJA under the legendary judoka Alan Petherbridge 9th **Dan OBE.**

Thank you to Wayne Lakin for years of private tuition and friendship, also to Neil Adams for allowing me into his elite full-time class. Thank you to all the lads at Neil's for looking after me and for being patient. Also to the legendary Alan Petherbridge OBE for taking me under his wing.

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Introduction

There has been a lot said of late about the art of grappling or, more specifically, the art of ground fighting. The grappling arts are enjoying a well-earned and long-awaited revival. Grappling was in vogue in the early part of this century, a period known as the Golden Age of Wrestling, but it popularity waned just before – and probably due to – the Great War, only to be reborn post-war as 'show grappling'. It would seem that grappling has always lain hidden within the shadow of contemporary combat, probably due to its unembellished demeanour. Its devastating potency is often hidden (to the uninitiated) by its lack of obvious aesthetic; people have been drawn instead to the superfluously spectacular kicking arts. However, the world of combat, and more specifically the world of martial arts, has now evolved and many of the more spectacular systems have failed the acid test of time and the pressure test of reality. They have crumbled under the weight of contemporary violence like a paper house in a hurricane. The prettier systems that originally

drew thousands like summer moths to a flame have balked at the obstacle of practicality, proving to be little more than showy glitz. The fundamental movements of the grappling arts, so often ignored due to the 'ugly duckling' syndrome, have risen above the maelstrom; the swan of real combat has blossomed leaving the 'flash' dead in the water.

Due to the well-publicised rise of the UFC (Ultimate Fight Competition) – cage fighting, reality combat and extreme fighting, everybody suddenly wants to fight on the floor, often to the detriment of all other ranges. I can understand this, ground grappling has been missing from martial arts for so long, and the UFC-type tournaments advertise grappling supremacy so well, it is only natural that people want to fill their baskets with the 'missing range'. Suddenly everyone (and his dog) is desperate to make up for their lack and learn the art of ground fighting. And so they should. I've been trying to tell people this for the last ten years. Having worked as a nightclub doorman for nine years I always knew that grappling was a vital part of the martial armoury. But this is where the

problems begin. Whilst it is important, even imperative to include grappling on the curriculum it should not be to the exclusion of the other ranges. Martial artists are abandoning their base style to become grapplers. This will do little more than move their weak link from one section of the martial chain to another. They become very good at the match-fight scenario where grapplers rule supreme, but wholly inadequate when it comes to anything involving the other ranges.

My speciality is adapting combat techniques to the street scenario, making it work outside the chip shop and for street-defence, specifically 3-second fighting and ambush fighting. Grappling can be very weak in this arena due to the four B's: biting, butting, blinding and buddies. You have to know grappling of course; you need a map around all of the combat ranges even if it is only to enable you to avoid the traps, but don't make this one range – or any range for that matter – your be all and end all. I have become a good grappler so that I can anti-grapple, and in a worst-case scenario so that I can

escape from a bad position on the floor should I make a mistake and find myself there. The fighter who becomes a great grappler because he has watched the reality tapes can find himself getting punched out in the bar by a 3-second fighter, or kicked to death by a football fan with not a single day of formal martial arts to his name. So let's keep things in context. Grapple, yes; but never neglect the other ranges that make up the armoury. If one range is neglected then you have a chink in the armour; you may be judged in a real situation on the strength of that one range, as they say, you are only as strong as your weakest link.

Equally with the ground-fighting phenomenon there has been little or no notice taken of the tachi waza, or standing techniques. A lot of what happens on the floor (unless you are an exceptional ground fighter) is wholly determined by how you got there. If you are thrown, dragged, kicked or punched to the floor and end up in a bad position you may never escape, or your opponent may be in a position to stand back up and kick pieces off you while you are on your back.

Judo

When we practise ground fighting we start from a neutral position. Both fighters with an equal start. In a real situation there is no such neutrality and you very much have to make the best of what you are given, that is unless you are the one who controls the take-down. The question that I always ask when watching demos of ground fighting prowess is, 'Yeah, but how do you get to that position from vertical fighting?' Thus my quest to learn the throws and take-downs from as many systems as possible began.

In this volume we will look specifically at the basic throws and take-downs of judo. Having studied this system for quite a chunk of my life I can vouch for the potency and dynamism of this much-underrated art.

As with ground fighting, don't make the throws and take-downs the be all and end all. Many opponents in a live scenario will not allow you to throw them cleanly, they will grip you like their very lives depend upon it and drag you to the floor

with them and if you don't know how to fight on the floor then you are up the proverbial creek.

As I have said in all of the books and videos that I put out, please don't rely on this book, or any other for that matter, to teach you, it must be used in combination with a good class or a good training partner. There is nothing like a real opponent to perfect the physical technique; I'd go as far as to say that it cannot be learned properly by book alone. Learn the fundamentals of the technique, and then put it under the pressure of a non-compliant partner to perfect it. Once you can work the technique on someone that doesn't want to be thrown, then you know you've got it off.

Compliance kills!

Compliance in training is only of use when first learning the fundamentals of a technique; once learned, an opponent should offer 100 per cent resistance. Taking the randori (free-fighting or sparring) out of a system is effectively taking the

teeth out of it. If there is no adversity, as they say, there is no advance.

Good luck with the practise and thank you for taking the time to read this book.

Chapter One
Balance, Stance, Grip

Let's start with the base. In the journey of a hundred miles the base is the first step. Knowing all the throws in the world won't help if you haven't got your balance or stance right. It is hard to throw an opponent (and easy to be thrown) when the balance is off. And to be brutally honest with you, balance will only come from having a pull on the mat with another player. What I can give you here is the fundamentals so that you can practise correctly from the very beginning. Hopefully this book will act as an appetiser for you to actually start a grappling class or even take private lessons from a local black belt.

The basic grappling stance is similar to the basic karate stance, only a lot smaller.

Presuming that you are working from a left lead (this of course can be reversed) you should stand in a small 45-degree stance.

The lead leg should be slightly bent at the knees and relaxed. The 45-degree stance allows you the right balance to throw an opponent and to stop him from throwing you. All the time that you move around, gripping the opponent and him gripping you, it is important to maintain this stance or you will be thrown. The only time the stance should change is when you enter to take a throw. If your throw is successful, or even if it is not, you should immediately revert back to the stance. If you do successfully throw the opponent you have the option of following him to the floor for ne-waza (ground fighting) or staying on your feet.

From this stance the left (lead) hand should reach to grip the opponent's right lapel (or shirt, coat, neck or hair if the situation was a street encounter). The right hand grips the opponent's left sleeve or wrist, or in the case of wrestling perhaps around the back of the triceps (upper arm).

This is the basic stance and grip to take when looking for a throw. In a street scenario you may not have the luxury to

choose a grip, you may have to take what is given. It doesn't matter much because once all the throws have been mastered you'll be able to take an opponent over from any grip and from any position. For now though we have to be content to work with the fundamentals until such time as we are more competent with the grips and throws.

The grips being described in this book are nothing more than basic and, depending upon how far you wish to take the art of grappling, whole books are available which are filled with different ways to dominate the grip of an opponent. At a high-level competition it is usually the better grip fighter who dominates and thus wins the day. Excellence in grip work also allows small players to completely dominate large players with lesser gripping ability. If you want more information on this subject I would refer you to the excellent book on grips by my friend Neil Adams, one of the best grip fighters on the planet at this moment in time.

So for now we should be content with basic grips, not forgetting the fact that we are very unlikely to meet any trained grapplers in a street attack (we hope). For the street, where fine motor actions are redundant when the adrenal syndrome is triggered, basic is what works best because it generally involves gross motor skills (big, simple movements). These are less affected by the presence of stress.

Once we have the basic stance and grip we use them to break the balance of our opponent. On the street we are unlikely to encounter anyone with great balance though they may have an innate ability to stay vertical, so they will not always be easy to move. On a dojo level however you will be working with players who do have great balance and it becomes a game of breaking balance as a precursor to the throw. In fact with a player of equal skill you are very unlikely to throw them at all without breaking balance first. This is slightly out of the context of this book as we are more concerned here with the attacker on the street than we are with the player in the dojo.

Judo

Basically we break the balance of an opponent with pulling or pushing actions, or by feigning one throw to unbalance him, thus leaving him vulnerable for the second throw.

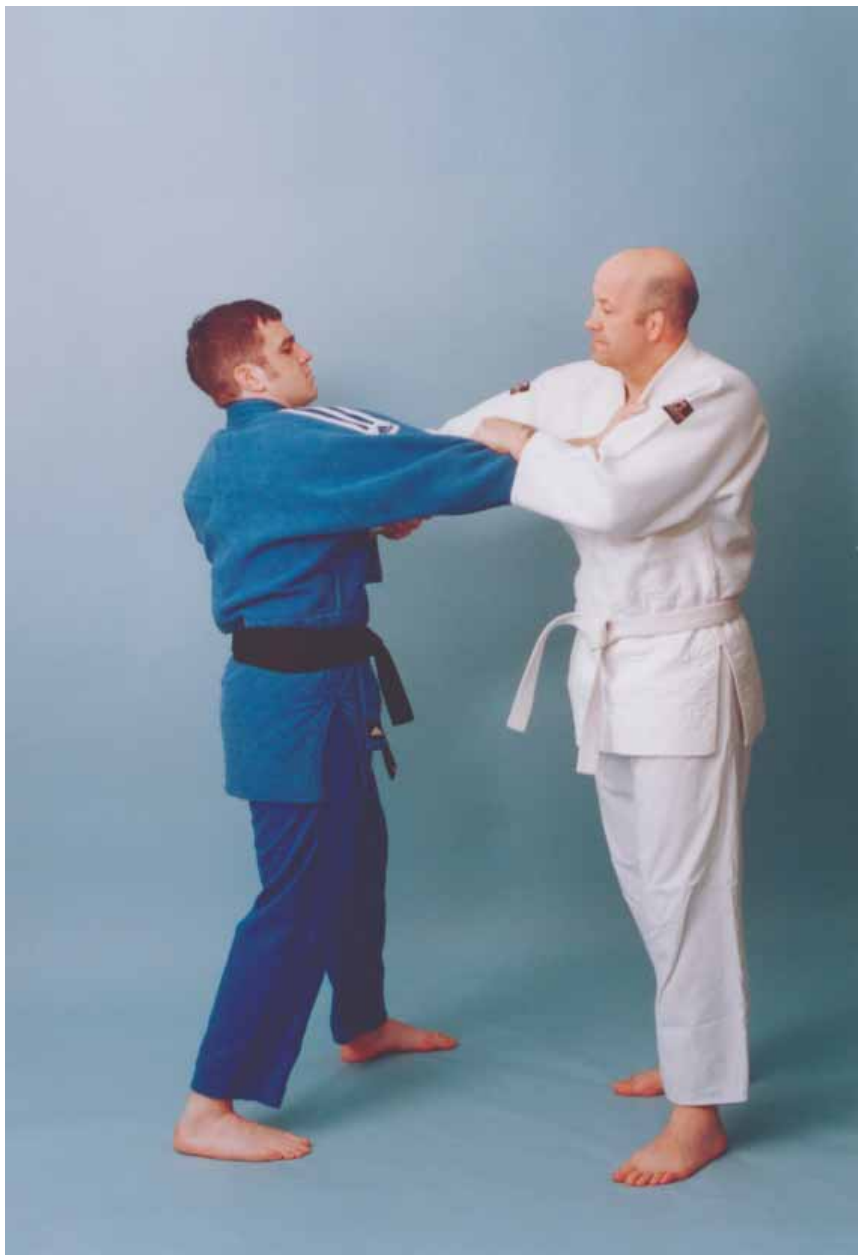
You break the opponent's balance by pushing or pulling him to the left rear, directly behind, to the right rear or directly to his right or left. Alternatively you can pull the opponent directly towards you, to your left rear or right rear or directly to the right or left. You can also pull him downward.

Any one of these actions will force the opponent to move, hopefully out of stance and off balance, and when he does you can execute a throw.

The other time to take an opponent off balance and take the throw is when he attempts his attack (a throw or punch for example) and you take advantage of his stance change to take him over. This is something that has to be felt and cannot be properly related via the pages of a book.

Stiff Arming

There is a term that is recognised in most forms of grappling called 'stiff arming'.



Stiff arming usually occurs with less skilful opponents, especially the type that you will meet in a street encounter, who literally hold you to the spot with their strength normally out of sheer terror of being thrown. They do not attack or defend, they just hold – very tightly. Dealing with stiff armers requires good grip work and a good sense of flow, using their strength against them by going with the flow of energy. If it's a street encounter you can kick them (anywhere) or strike them with any available technique before you attempt a throw. It goes without saying that in most grappling sports this would be frowned upon so don't do it, or if you do don't tell them that I said you could! The blow before the throw will break the balance of the stiff armer, creating a window of opportunity; *then* you bang in the throw.

If you encounter a fighter with no or little clothing to grab then the throwing technique has to change slightly. You need to revert to the wrestling type grips and use the opponent's limbs to grip as opposed to the clothing. From my experience of working with several systems of grappling the wrestling

take-downs are favourite here because they do not rely upon clothing to take an opponent over. Some of the Greco (Greco-Roman wrestling) snatches and freestyle leg take-downs come into their own in this scenario.

It is important that you have a pull around with an opponent (preferably lots of different opponents) to get used to balance and grip and entries for the throws; the more time you are on the mat the better.

Chapter Two
Taiotoshi (Body Drop)

The following techniques in this book teach you how to take the throw from a static position, which is fine when you are learning the rudiments, but not so good when it comes to dealing with an opponent who is moving around and being awkward. I will not pretend that illustrations in a book can even begin to show movement, but it is enough to say that, once the rudiments of any throw are mastered they should be practised in a randori (free-fighting) situation so that you can throw an opponent who is on the move.

Once you can execute the throw from a standing position, moving uchi-komi (technique work) is highly encouraged. This can be done in lines, so that you move forward and back practising the technique, then uchi-komi in combinations and on the move. So basically you would move around the mat with an opponent and execute five different techniques.

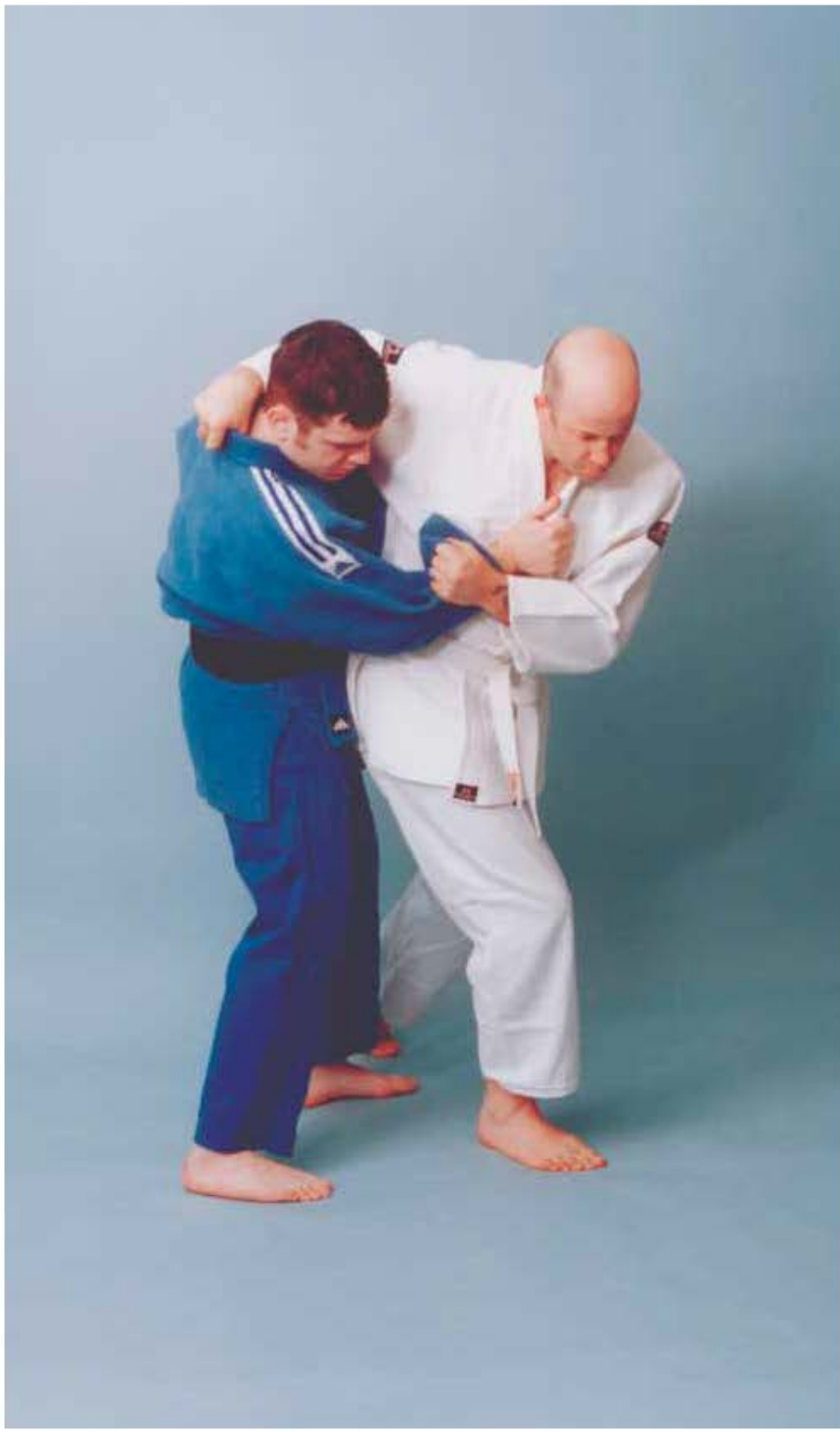
You can then include 60 per cent randori (which always seems to end up as 100 per cent randori), then increase to all out fighting. It is imperative though that you get in some sparring work if you ever want to make it work for real. Static work is only useful in the early stages of learning.

After executing a throw on an opponent you have the choice as to whether you want to keep hold of the opponent and finish with ne-waza (ground work) or whether you wish to let him go and either finish with your feet or run away; the choice is entirely yours and is usually determined by the severity of the situation. Some opponents, in their fear, will hold on to you for dear life and you will be forced over with them, taking the fight to the ground.

The body drop is a devastating throw that, when employed properly, puts an opponent out of the game rather clinically, especially with a skilled thrower using perfect entry and timing, and a snap at the end of the throw. It can be executed with or without the appendage of an opponent's clothing.

Judo

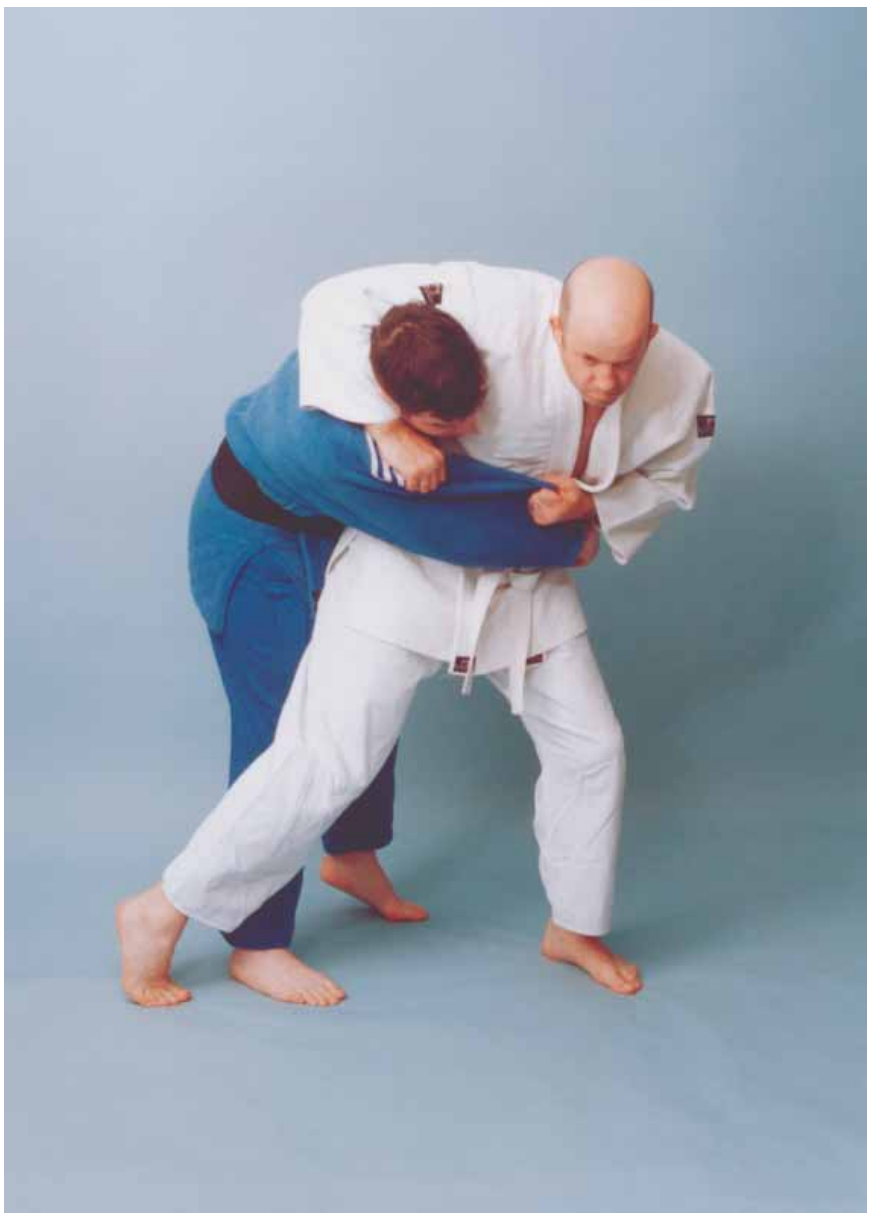
Break the opponent's balance to the right front corner. Advance your right foot to the opponent's right foot. Position your body so that your right foot blocks the opponent's right ankle whilst bending your left leg. Because you have broken the opponent's balance by pushing him back he will automatically try to re-establish his balance by coming forward. This is the exact time to catch the energy and take the throw, forward and over the back of your right ankle. This needs to be done with speed and force. As the opponent trips over the back of your ankle, straighten the right leg and drive the opponent forward by pulling with your left grip and driving with your right grip.



Ippon Shionagi (Shoulder Throw)

Judo

To throw without the use of a jacket the same movements are required, only you should wrap your right arm around the opponent's head before executing the footwork.



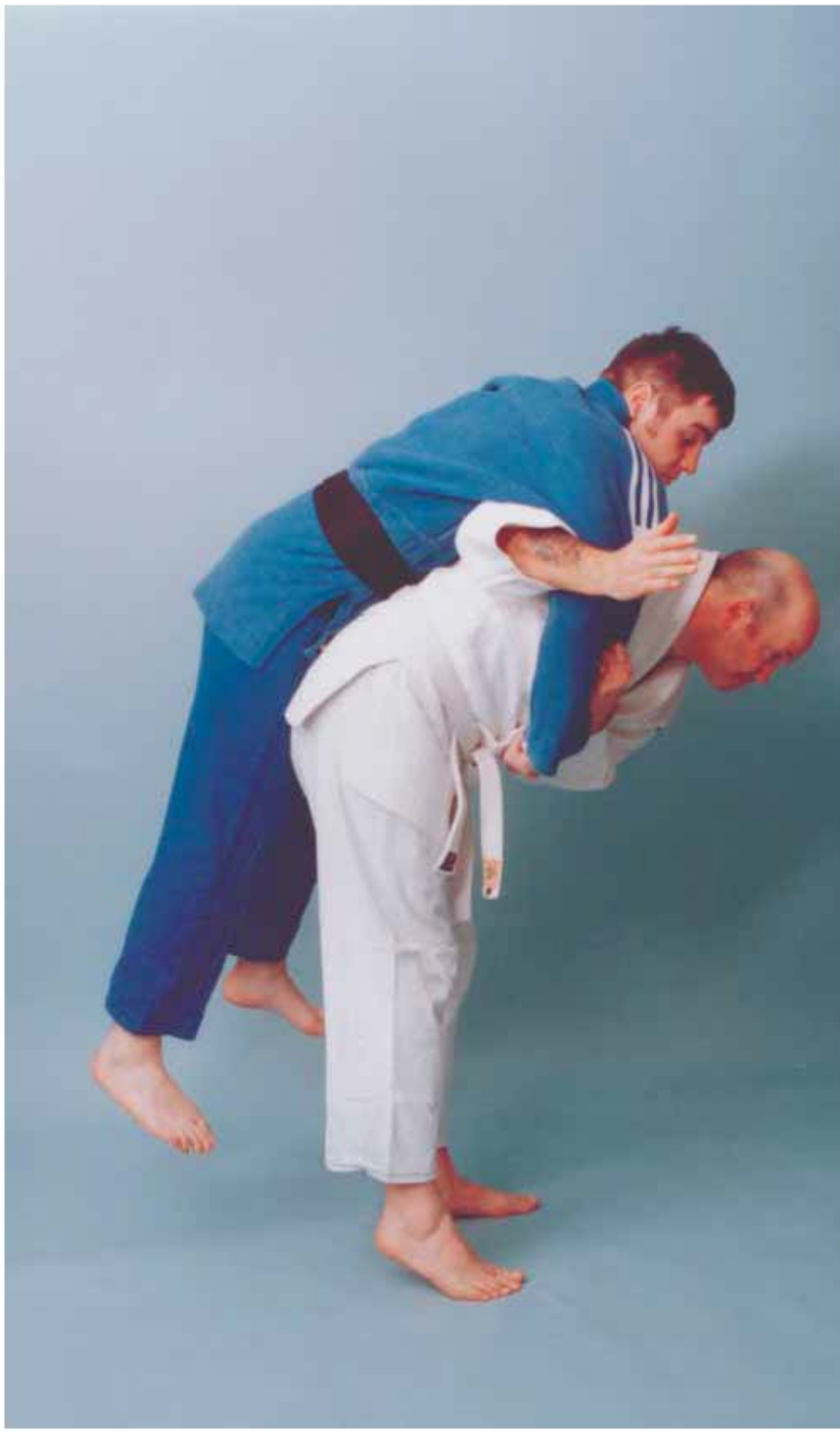
Chapter Three
Ippon Shionagi (Shoulder Throw)

This is a great technique, it's the one that they always seem to demonstrate (badly) in the James Bond movies where the 9-stone young woman throws the huge baddie clean over her shoulder. Of course it is not as simple as that, but it is a good technique if you can perfect it. From my experience of judo this is the one favoured by most, particularly the variation of the drop shionagi where the thrower drops to his knees to execute the throw. I have to say that this is not my own personal favourite, I am not keen on turning my back completely on an opponent, but I do have many friends that employ it with great success.

Break the opponent's balance backwards, he will automatically push back to realign his balance. As he does so steal the energy given and advance your right foot towards his right foot. Make a body turn, bending your knees so that you are under his centre of gravity. Simultaneously, thrust

your right arm under his right armpit. Grip hold of his attire if there is any to grab. Keep both of your feet inside of his feet, as shown, and throw the opponent.

Ippon Shionagi (Shoulder Throw)



If you were doing drop shionagi you would drop to your knees, throw the opponent over your right shoulder and slam him into the floor.

Again this needs to be mastered at a static level and then practised with a moving opponent, progressing to a randori situation. If there is no randori in your practise then you are unlikely to ever develop anything other that a good compliant throw (no matter what your instructor might tell you). In other words it won't work on anyone that doesn't want it to work. The reason I say this is because I am aware that there are systems of grappling out there that do not do any kind of randori. This is daft, you need pressure (and plenty of it) if you want to use this stuff in a real fight. It is very important at this stage that we all know where we stand in regard to methods of practise; if there is no adversity in your training there is no advance. Taking the randori out of your training is like taking the sting out of the bee. Throwing a compliant opponent is completely different to throwing a non-compliant one, the technique is completely different. The confidence and self-esteem that are associated with good grappling systems come from the hard randori, not from a compliant opponent who lets you throw him around all day long. Commercially a system without fighting is great because there

is no real threat or danger and so the numbers attending are always high. Practically though it is disastrous because you are not preparing people properly for what is fast becoming a highly violent society.

A shoulder throw is also a good technique to employ when grabbed from behind, but you do have to be very quick because people that grab you from the back usually do it so that they can drag you to the floor and kick your head in before stealing your money (or worse). They don't grab you and just hold you there.

Chapter Four
Ogoshi (Hip Throw)

The hip throw is not really a devastating throw and although it is taught on the curriculum in judo you very rarely see anyone actually execute it under pressure. The reason I have included it in here is because, at a higher level, you can execute advanced versions of the throw that are effective, so it is important to get the rudiments now.

From the conventional lapel or sleeve grip this throw can be both simple and effective though, as with all throws, it relies on a fast explosive entry.

Break the opponent's balance backwards and to the right corner. When he pushes back to realign his balance steal the energy. Simultaneously advance your right foot forward towards your opponent's right foot, feed your right arm around his waist (or head or armpit) and make a body turning in entry and bend at the knees so that your bottom is pushing

into his lower abdomen. Make sure that both of your feet are inside the opponent's feet. Throw the opponent forward by straightening your legs and exploding him over your hip. Slam him into the floor. This throw works equally well with or without the added leverage of an opponent's clothing.

Ogoshi (Hip Throw)

As a nightclub doorman I used this throw frequently on violent opponent's who tried to struggle when I was dragging them, via a headlock, out of the club. I always used it from the headlock as opposed to 'arm around the waist.' What I liked about the throw was the fact that it allowed me to throw an opponent over with varying degrees of force. If they were very violent I would throw them heavily so that they could not get back up again. If they were not so dangerous I could just tumble them over and control their fall so that, although they were on their back and under my control, they were not injured.

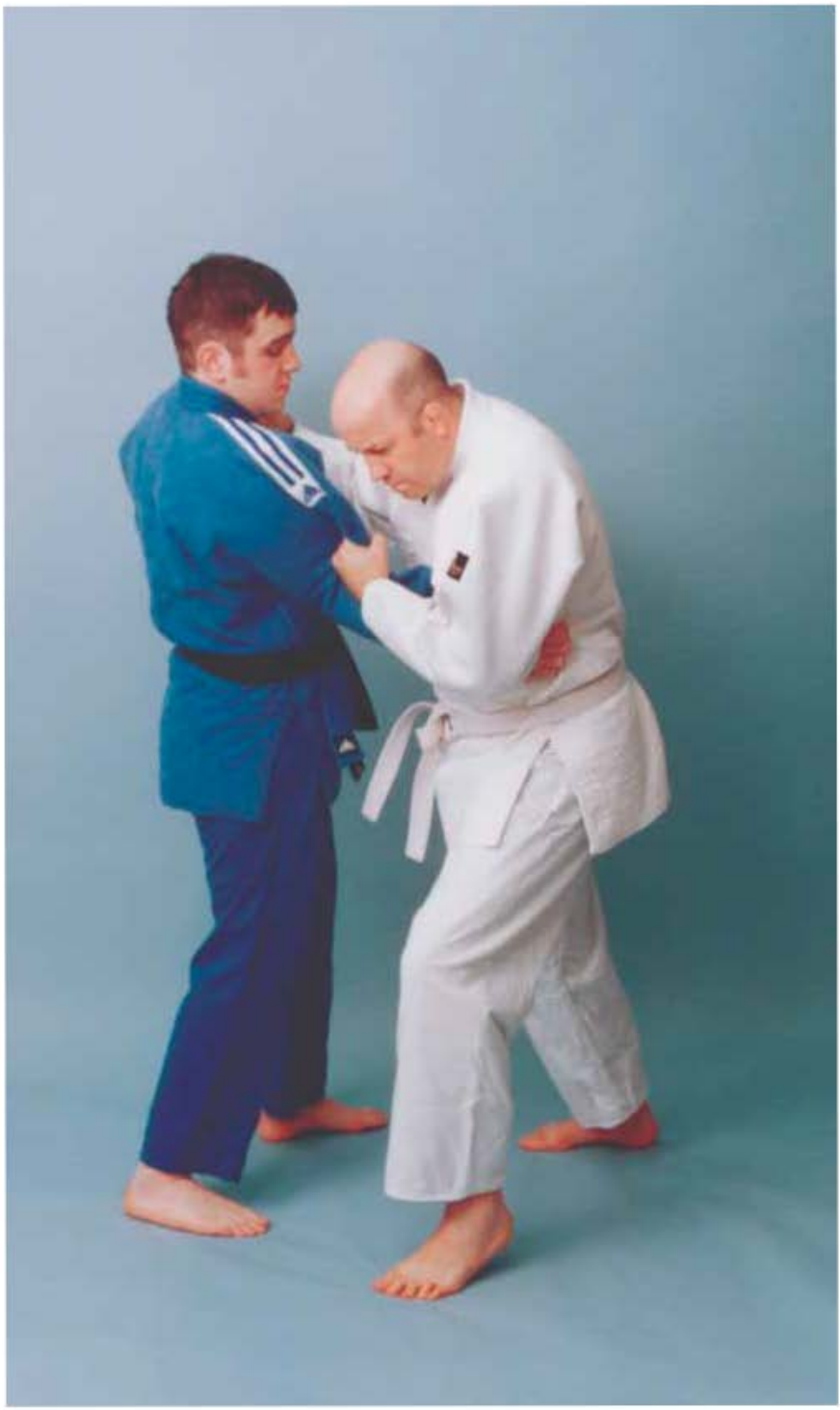
Chapter 5
Osoto Gari (Major Outside Reap)

Osoto is a scary throw. It is one of those throws that devastate an opponent. I have friends who use this technique in a street situation all the time and have to control the fall of the opponent so as not to seriously injure them. It is easily accessible and highly dangerous. Caution should be a priority if you decide to employ this technique.

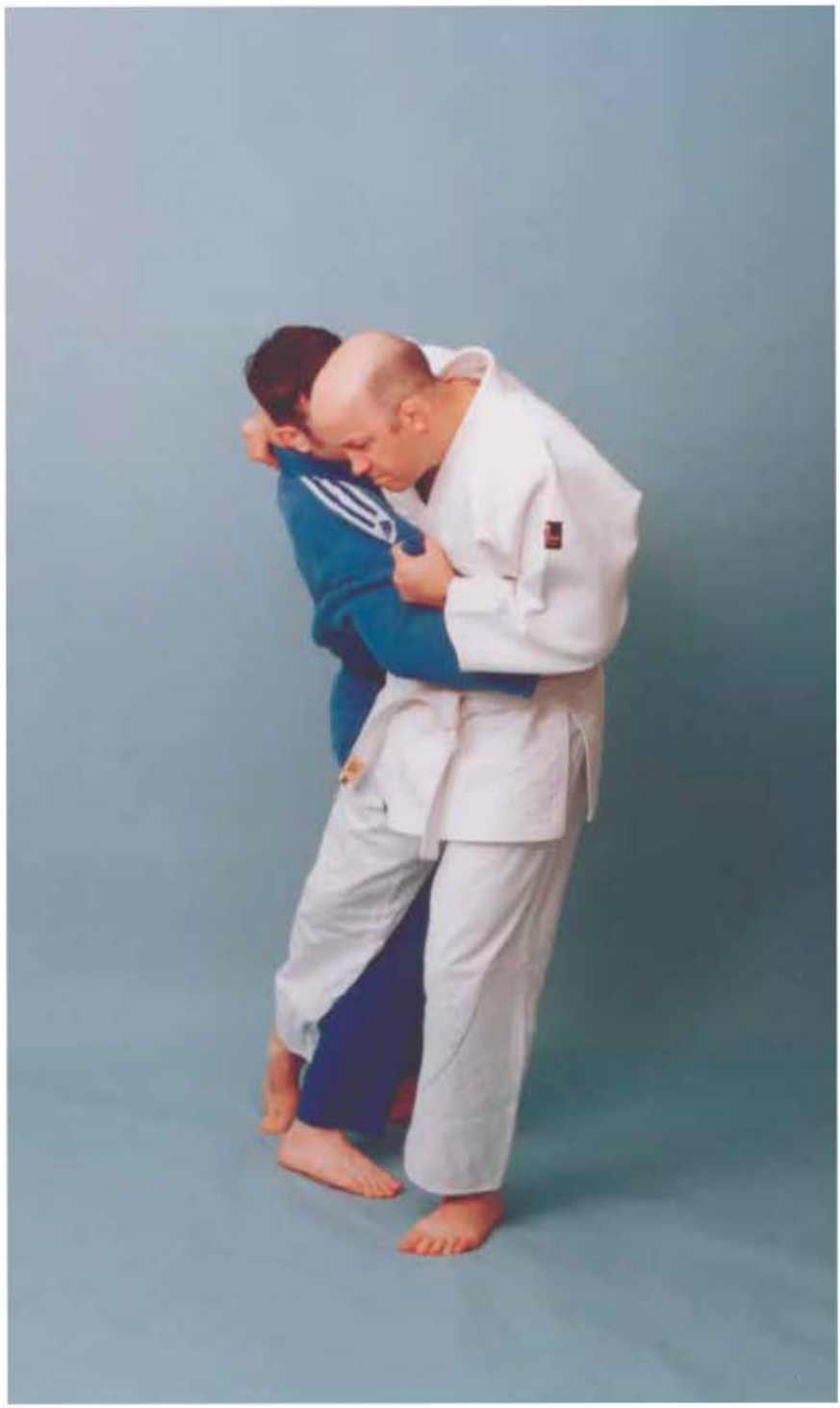
One of my students, he shall remain anonymous, used osoto on countless occasions in his duties as a police officer. He had enough control over the throw to be able to take people over and manage their fall so that they were controlled but without major injury. Mostly he would just knock the wind out of them, though he did say that not one of his opponents made it to their feet voluntarily after being caught with this technique.

Again this works best from the conventional lapel or sleeve grip (when you get used to throwing techniques you will be able to throw an opponent from any grip).

Pretend to try and pull the opponent forward, he will resist by pulling back, when he does steal the energy and go with his pull. Break his balance backward to the right corner as you simultaneously advance your left foot forward. Continue to draw the opponent's balance outward as you reap your leg to the back of the opponent's right leg. Keep your toes pointed downwards and reap the back of his calf. Pull down with your left hand and drive hard, to the right, with your right hand. Your opponent's weight will now be on his right leg as you reap it from under him, slamming him on to his back.

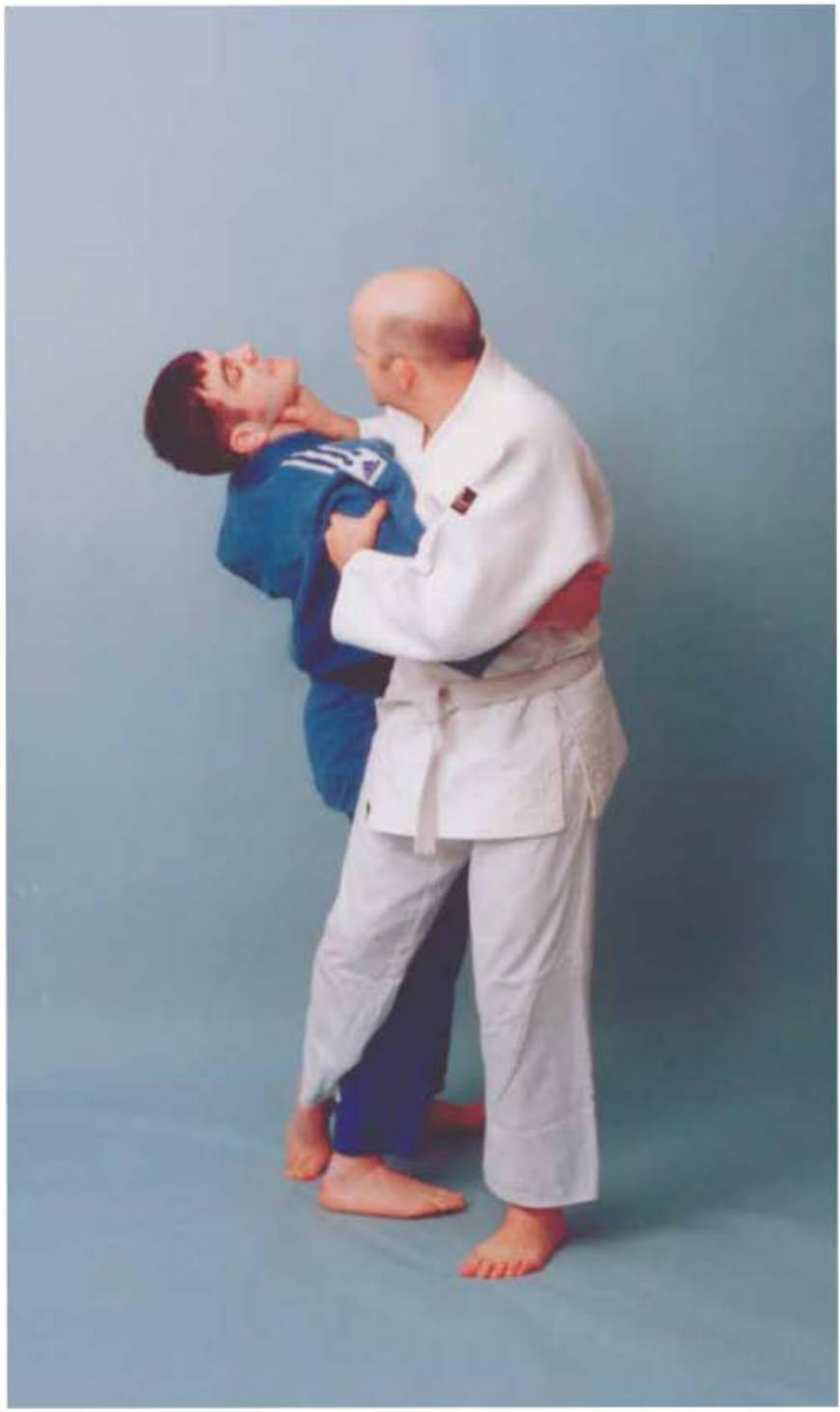


Osoto Gari (Major Outside Reap)



If you want to make the throw a little more gratuitous release your right hand grip and grab the opponent's throat as you throw, driving him backwards with the reap. Sometimes it is also effective to drive the opponent's head backwards by slamming your right bicep under his nose as you reap.

When you reap with osoto try not to wrap your leg around his, it is more effective if you can keep your leg stiff and literally just reap his leg from under him.



Osoto Gari (Major Outside Reap)

Chapter Six
Ouchi Gari (Major Inside Reap)

Ouchi is not an easy throw to take someone experienced over with, but when you are fighting against an inexperienced grappler, which street fighters normally always are, you can catch them every time. Ouchi is, predominantly, a close range take-down. The problem with this is the fact that it is very difficult to take the opponent cleanly, you normally always get pulled over with the throw. This in itself is not such a bad thing if you are only fighting against one opponent and you can fight on the floor. But if you are facing more than one opponent you could be in trouble. No matter how much you might be able to devour the other fellow on the floor, it will not help if his mates are kicking your head in the process (remember the four B's – biting, butting, blinding and buddies). But then this is the problem with any situation that finds you on the floor fighting with an aggressive foe. It happens, and if it happens you still have to make the best of a bad situation. If you do find yourself on the floor with several

opponents around you, try to control the person that you are fighting and use him as a shield, so if his mates are attacking you they are also, inadvertently, attacking him. I have had several friends, fellow doormen and martial artists, stabbed by the girlfriends of the men they were rolling around the floor with. It is not safe so don't court it; if the shit hits the fan and you end up on the floor, get to your feet as soon as possible. If you are only fighting the one fellow and you are competent on the floor, that's fine, take your time and do a good job.

What I tend to do with ouchi gari is pull on the opponent as though I am trying to drag him forward. This will force him to react by pulling back up, when he does I go with the energy and break his balance to the back as I simultaneously reap my right leg through and around the lower portion of his left ankle. Then I lift his leg off the ground with my leg as I drive him back over with my right arm.

On entry you should feel as though you are chest to chest with the opponent; if it is a street encounter you may even butt him in the face on entry. Try and drive him to the floor and stay standing yourself. If you are forced to go over with him then make sure that, as you land on him, you land heavy and hard. Again if you hit the deck make sure that you secure a strong ne-waza position immediately. There is always a mad scramble as soon as two fighters hit the floor, so make sure that you dominate and take the offensive. Most people that you fight in the street, with few exceptions, will only be good for a few seconds after which they'll be like a sack of shit. For that few seconds though they'll be crazily strong indeed.

Ouchi Gari (Major Inside Reap)

Ouchi Gari (Major Inside Reap)

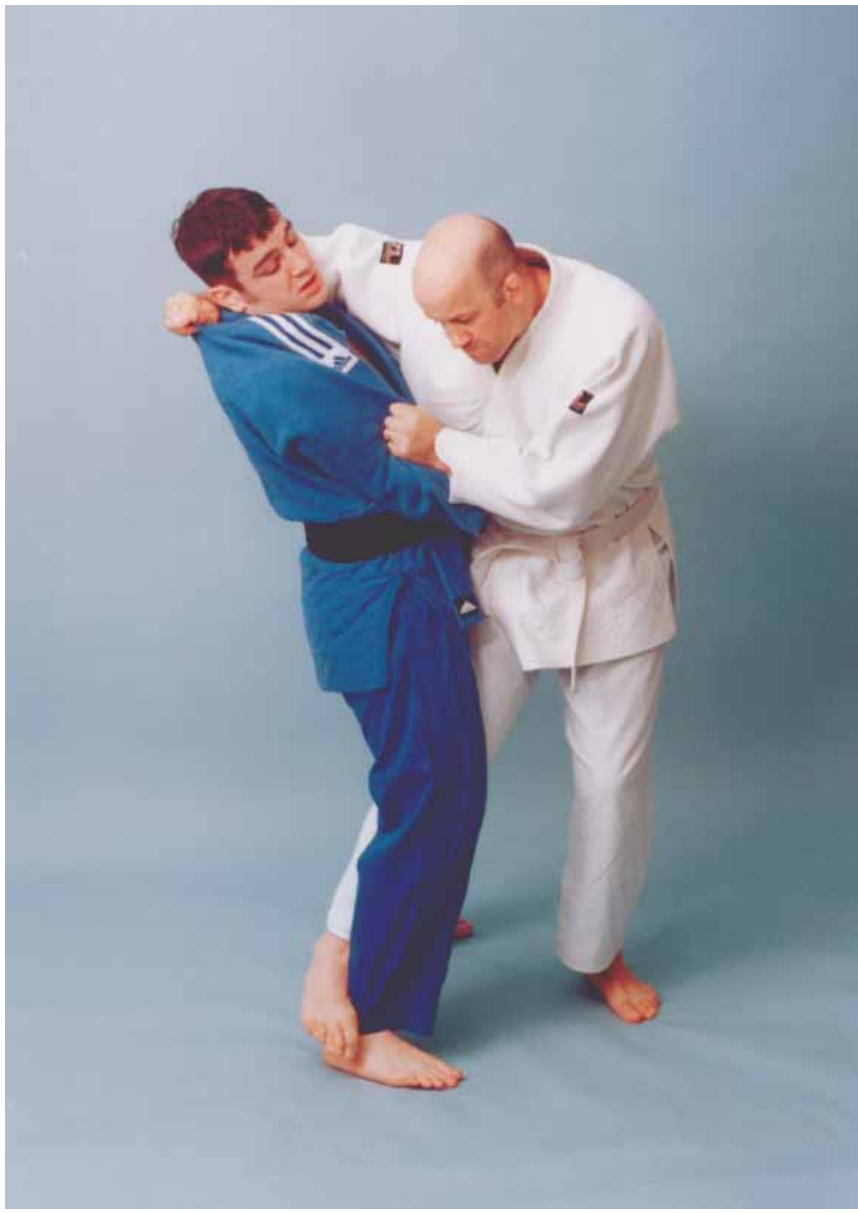
Ouchi gari is a reaping action, but if for some reason your reap does not take the opponent's balance you could employ ouchi gaki which is the same technique with a hook instead of a reap. When you make your entry and place your right leg around the back of the opponent's left leg, hook their leg up instead of reaping it. Once hooked drive them over on to their back. If at first they do not go just keep hopping forward until they do.

Chapter Seven
Kouchi Gari (Minor Inside Reap)

Kouchi gari is a minor reaping technique that, on the surface, doesn't look like that much of a technique. But once mastered it is fantastic. It is the main technique I use in my randori. The better judo players use this technique quite often to set up a bigger throw like osoto gari. They use the kouchi as a balance breaker (or even a feint). I use it, especially outside, as a trip to get the opponent off his feet and on to the ground, where I can either run away, finish with kicking techniques or follow down to use my ne-waza. If the timing is correct this can be a devastating technique.

This technique can be used at range or very close up. The simplest way is at close range so I'll stick to that for the purpose of this book. The long-range kouchi is a more advanced technique that can be learned as an extension of the smaller version.

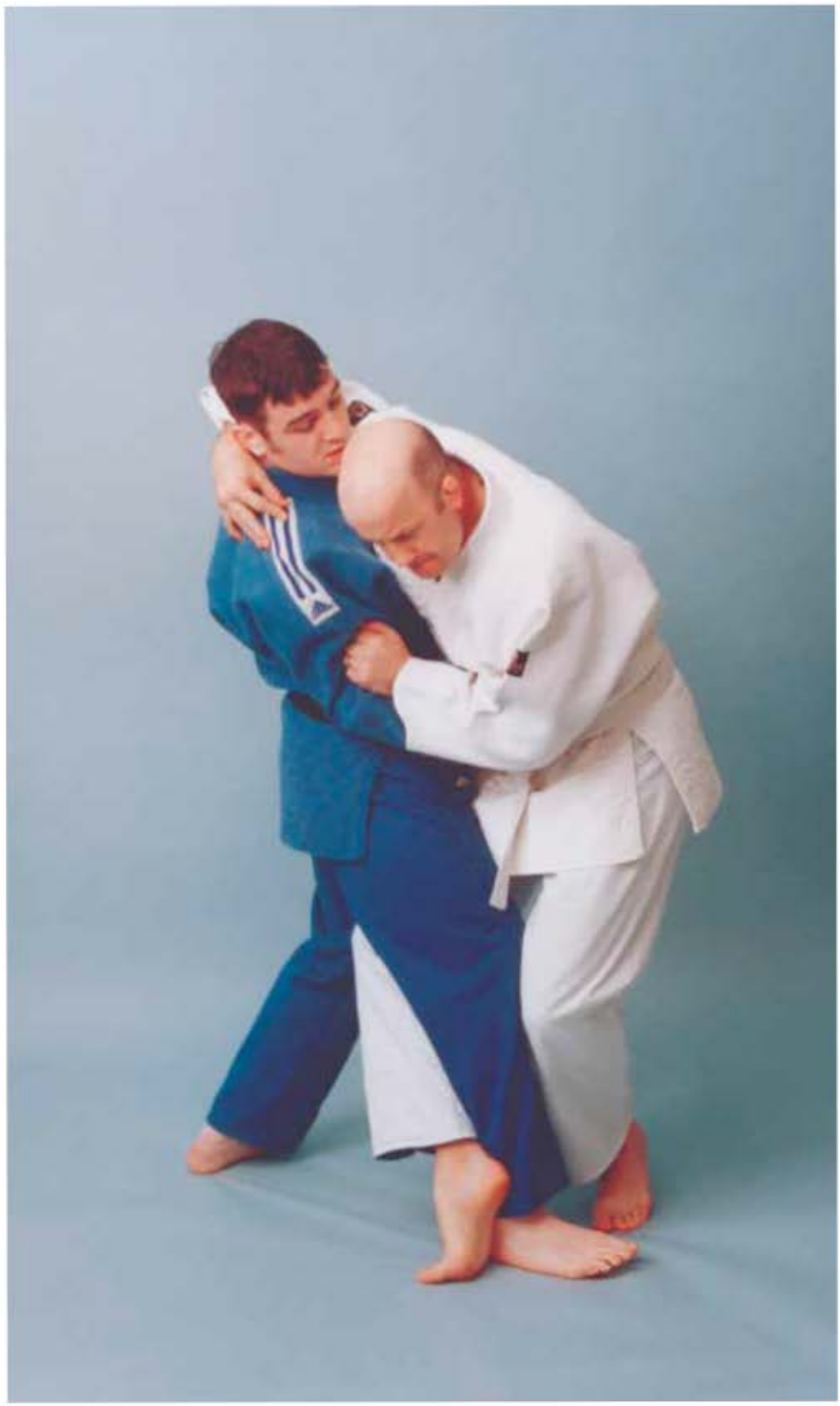
I like to work this from a strong high right hand grip. I pull the opponent forward and down. This does two things; it brings his right leg forward (if it wasn't already forward) and it forces him to try and pull back up again. When he does I will resist initially to make him think that I am trying to pull him over, then I will suddenly relax and let him pull back up. As he pulls I will steal the energy that this creates and drive him backwards with my strong right arm. Simultaneously I will hook my right foot around the back of the opponent's right ankle and sweep it away as I push, slamming him on to his back.



A more advanced version of this is to time your foot-sweep with his right foot stepping forward. As he transfers his weight from left leg to right, sweep it away.

Kouchi gari is a sweeping action, but if your sweep does not take the opponent's balance you could employ kouchi gaki, which is the same technique with a hook instead of a reap. When you make your entry and place your right foot at the back of the opponent's right foot, hook their leg up instead of reaping it. Once hooked drive them over on to their back. Again, if at first they do not go over just keep hopping forward until they do.

Kouchi Gari (Minor Inside Reap)



Chapter Eight
Harai Goshi (Sweeping Hip Throw)

This is a variation on the basic hip throw. It is a lot more practical than ogoshi because it employs the strong right leg in a sweeping action (or left if working the opposite way). It is especially effective for close range vertical grappling.

You can't always choose your grip in a real encounter but I do prefer to work this technique from a high right-handed grip. But you could throw the opponent from almost any grip once the technique has been mastered. Also, if you are a good grip fighter you can change one grip for another almost at will. Good grip fighters, like the lads I trained with at the Neil Adams Centre, are brilliant at grip work and no matter how strong a hold you seem to get on them they take it right off again. With some of their snapping grip releases they have actually been known to break the fingers of their opponents (accidentally of course). Again, this is slightly peripheral to this book and should be seen as a separate study. Suffice to

say that I have mentioned it here in the hope that you might explore it more.

As I said, I like to work this from close range with a high right grip. Pull the opponent down with your right hand (if you want him to step forward to expose his right leg also pull him forward so that he steps with the said leg). He will react by pulling back up again, as he does, steal the energy created and quickly advance your right foot towards the opponent's right foot. Then make a turn in entry so that your left foot is positioned next to your right, with knees bent and your bottom driving into his lower abdomen. Pick the opponent up on your hip as you would with a normal hip throw, and then, almost at the same time, sweep the back of your right thigh against the front of the opponent's right thigh. Continue sweeping backwards with your leg and drive the opponent directly forward and over the thigh, slamming him into the floor.

Harai Goshi (Sweeping Hip Throw)

This is a big throw if you can bring all of the elements together all at once. If you listen to the opponent's energy and go with it, he will throw himself. Sometimes the opponent will create all the energy you need for the throw by the way he moves; if this is the case then all you have to do is reap that energy and throw him over. However, if he is stiff arming you and there is a deadlock in the action it is down to you to create a window of opportunity by moving him around and creating an opening. This though will take experience and a lot of mat work so the more partner work you can get in the better.

Chapter Nine
Uchimata (Inner Thigh Throw)

I have to say that this is a highly skilled throw, much favoured by the international judo set that use it frequently. In normal randori, only the special players seem to be able to pull it off, not so much because it is a highly skilled throw, rather because it is a throw that seems easy to defend once you have a bit of knowledge. So on the mat it will take time to make this throw your own; in the street however we are dealing with unskilled fighters whose only attributes are aggression and strength and even this is limited to how long their stamina lasts. Because of this you'd probably have more joy in a street situation than in the dojo where skilled players use skilled defence. One of the things that I like about this technique is the fact that it can also be used as an attack to the groin. In the dojo, players often whack the thigh into the opponent's groin on the pretext of attempting uchimata in order to slow an aggressive player down a little. It does the job let me tell

you. So, if needs be, it can be used as a strike to weaken a strong street opponent.

The entry is very similar to that of harai goshi but the sweeping leg is positioned between the opponent's legs as opposed to on the outside.

Lead with your right leg on this one and work from a high right grip. Pull down on the opponent so that he is forced to pull back up again; when he does, steal the energy this creates to make your entry. Spin and place your left foot as deep between the opponent's legs as possible. Bend at the knees so that you are below his centre of gravity and pick him up on you hip like you would in an ogoshi attack. Almost simultaneously straighten your legs and sweep your right thigh upward and between the opponent's legs whilst pulling him to the front with your grip. Drive him hard into the mat.

Uchimata (Inner Thigh Throw)

There is a lot of commitment with this attack and quite often the thrower goes over with the opponent. As we said earlier, this can be a good thing and it can be a bad thing, depending upon the circumstances. On the mat it is no great shakes either way, but in a street scenario, going over with the opponent could prove fatal.

The entry to this technique is the hardest thing to master, so a lot time should be spent mastering this element of the throw. Isolate the entry if needs be so that you can get in as quickly and cleanly as possible.

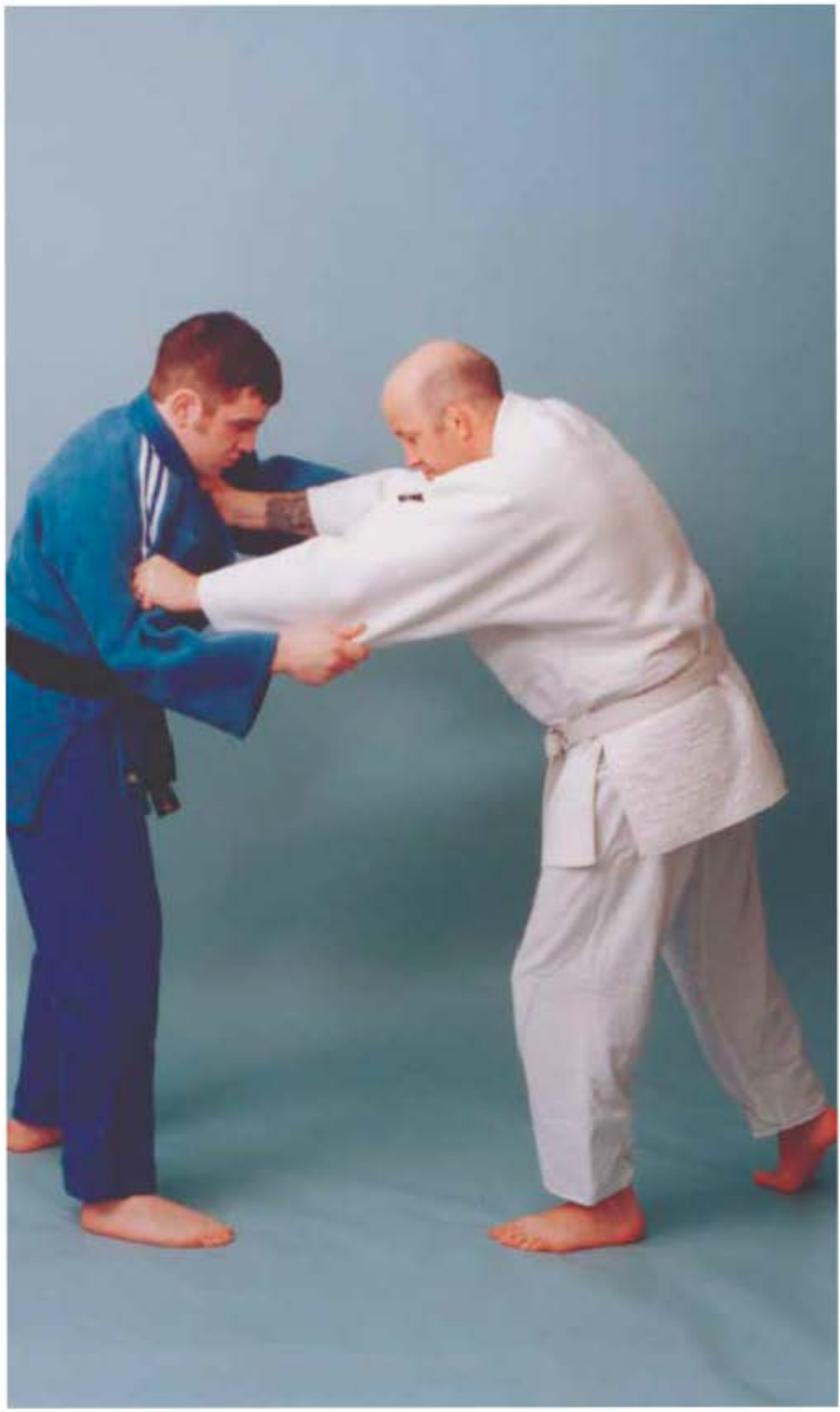
Chapter Ten
Hiza Garuma (Knee Wheel)

This is another one of those little techniques that I find very effective in a real situation. It's so effective because it is so simple. You literally trip the opponent over. It's not the biggest throw in the book, though you can throw a fellow with force, but it does get him over which is the main aim of any throw. As with most of the throws, the hands play a vital role here. When I throw with hiza garuma (or sasi surikomi ashi which is more or less the same throw, but propping the opponent's ankle as opposed to his knee) I use my hands, certainly my right hand, in a punching action, as if I am trying to punch the opponent in the head. My left support arm is used in a strong pulling action.

The control with this throw is excellent, and gives very little opportunity for the opponent to pull you over with him when he goes. Remember that these throws can all be reversed and should all be practised from both sides.

Hiza Garuma (Knee Wheel)

From a right hand grip, step to the right of the opponent (this adds momentum to the pull or push of the throw) as you simultaneously prop the sole of your left foot on the opponent's knee, thrusting your right hand in the direction of his ear and pulling down hard with your left hand. The hand action is often referred to as turning a steering wheel because that is what it looks like. As you pull and push, the opponent will be forced to step forward to stop himself from overbalancing. Because you have propped his leg at the knee he will not be able to step forward and will be thrown over your left leg. Slam him into the floor.



From here you are in an ideal position either to take the opponent for an arm bar, release him so that you can finish from a vertical position, or run away – your choice.

Conclusion

As you can see, all the moves I have included in this text are the main judo throws that differ from the other throwing systems. There are a myriad more throws in the judo system; throws that should be explored in depth if your aim is to develop a good tachi waza (throwing technique). I've tried to be as honest as I can and not just fill your head with a million techniques. I'd rather show you the ones that are most prolifically used in randori and on the street. If you can master these then you'll be ready to try other throws. It's better to be really good at one or two throws that to know a hundred or more but not be able to use them. All the great throwers I have worked with base their whole tachi waza experience around one or two favoured throws. Some use only one throw. They make that one technique so good that it rarely fails.

Please remember that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link and, as far as street defence goes, throwing on its own is not enough. You need to be proficient in all ranges of physical

combat from kicking and punching to vertical grappling and ground fighting – all with and without jackets. Many fighters are great at throwing and ne-waza when they have a jacket to use as an appendage, but without it they are lost. Similarly non-jacketed wrestlers rarely know how to take advantage of an opponent's clothing in a real fight. So hit every avenue and leave no stone unturned.

With a contemporary enemy, the main fighting range is that of the 3-second fighter where a physical attack is preceded by some kind of aggressive or even disarming dialogue. In 3-second fighting the punching range is king and all other ranges – as a rule of thumb – are relegated to the realms of support system. Learn to use your hands both defensively and as a strong, clinical attacking tool and most situations will be over before they even begin. If you misread the signs and a fight goes from punching range to vertical grappling then the techniques in this book, and any others that you can use from other throwing systems, will be invaluable.

Don't forget though that many fighters will not go over without a fight, they will grip and grab hold of you and pull you to the floor with them. If at this stage of the altercation you do not know how to fight on the floor you are already on your way to possible defeat, especially if you are fighting a road digger with forearms like Popeye.

In this text I have shown the throwing techniques in their raw form. Once you perfect them it is wise to practise using the forgotten about 'blow before throw' of old judo. That is, whack them with a strike to set up the energy for a throw. It makes sense. And it's a hell of a lot easier.

As a final point I feel it is my duty to say that I believe violence is not the answer and that we should avoid conflict whenever we can. Long-term, and non-violent, solutions to the problems that we are experiencing in the world should be sought and if you can find an alternative to the violent response I believe that you should use it. Always walk away when the situation allows it, even if that means eating a little humble

pie. Ultimately judo, or any fighting art worth its salt, should teach you to walk away with confidence.

Good luck with your practise and thank you for reading my book.

God bless.

Geoff Thompson 2001

The Throws and Take-Downs of Sombo

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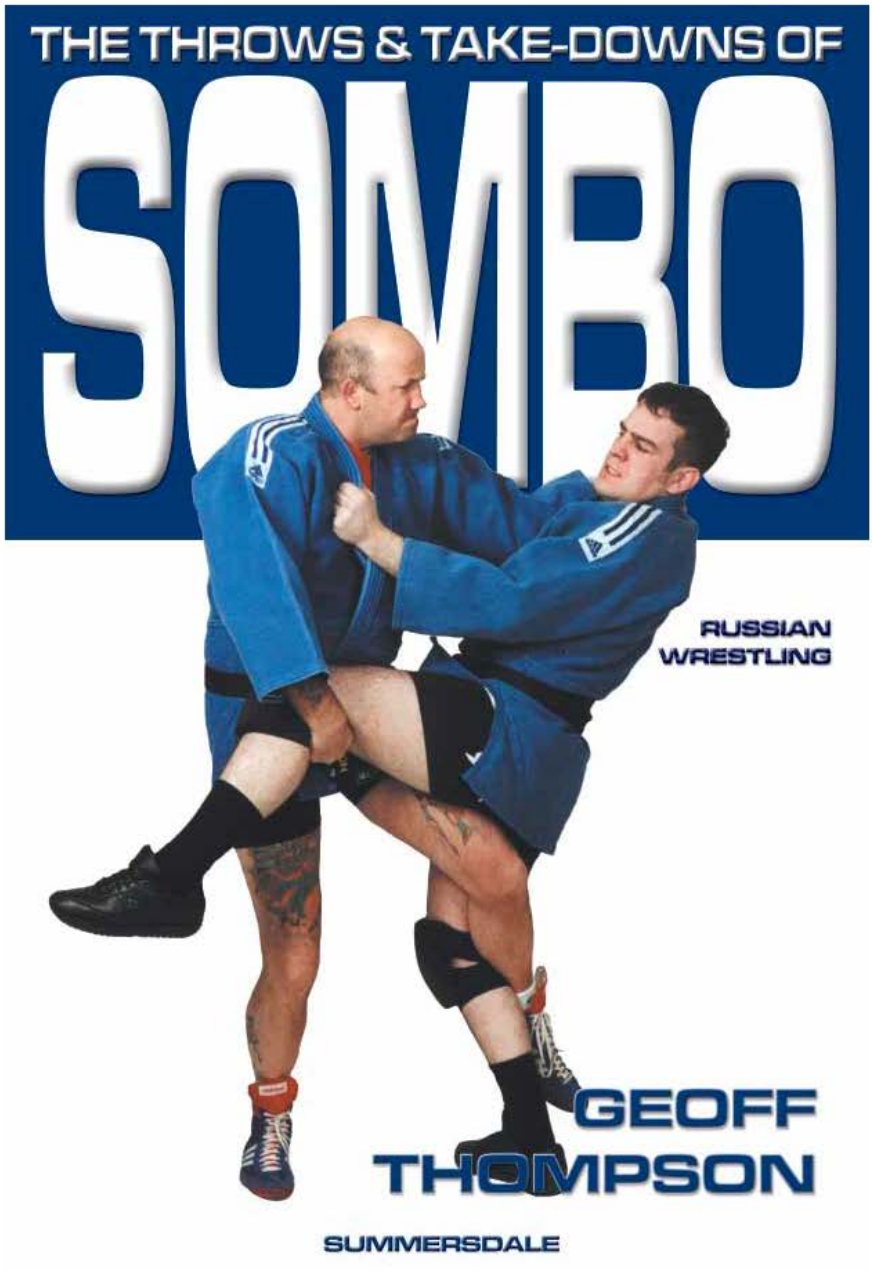

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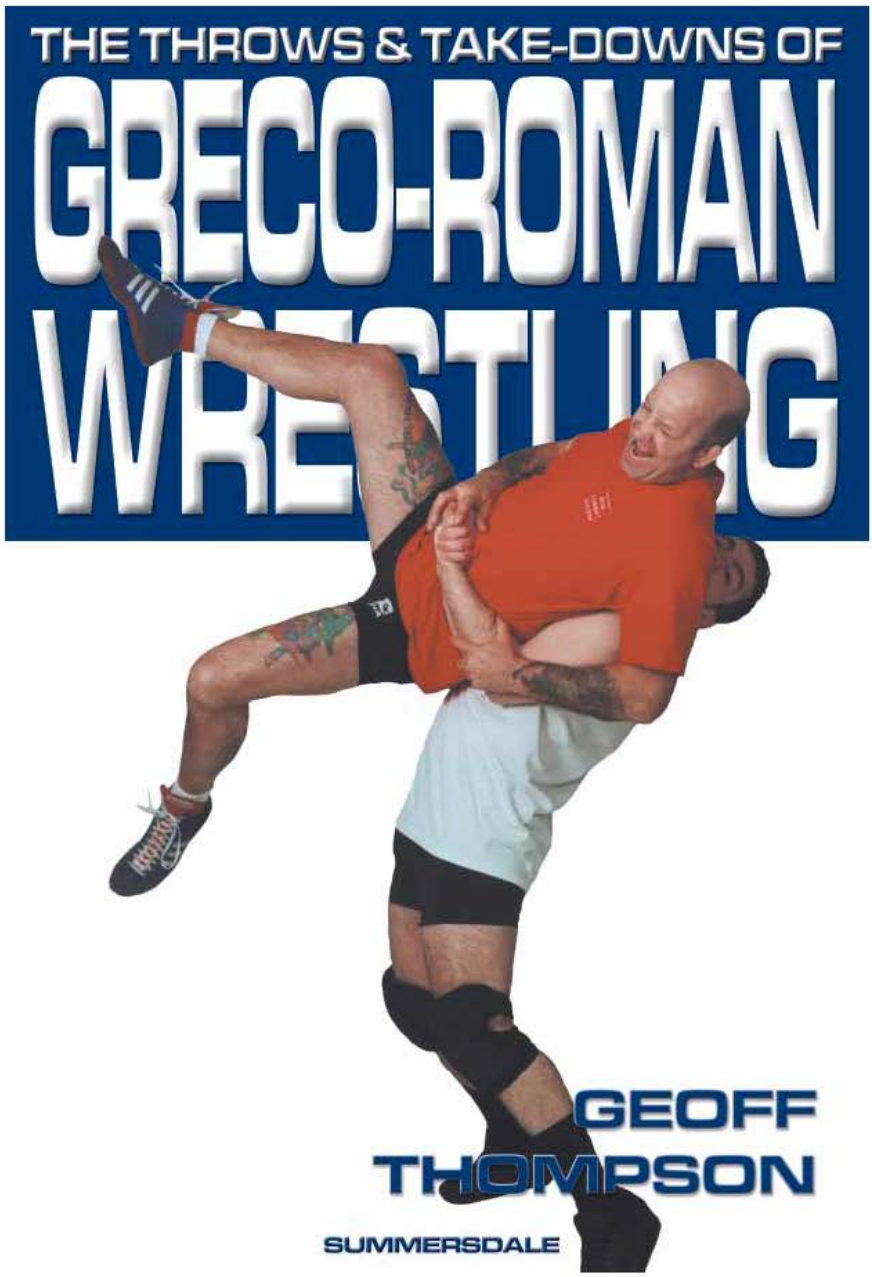

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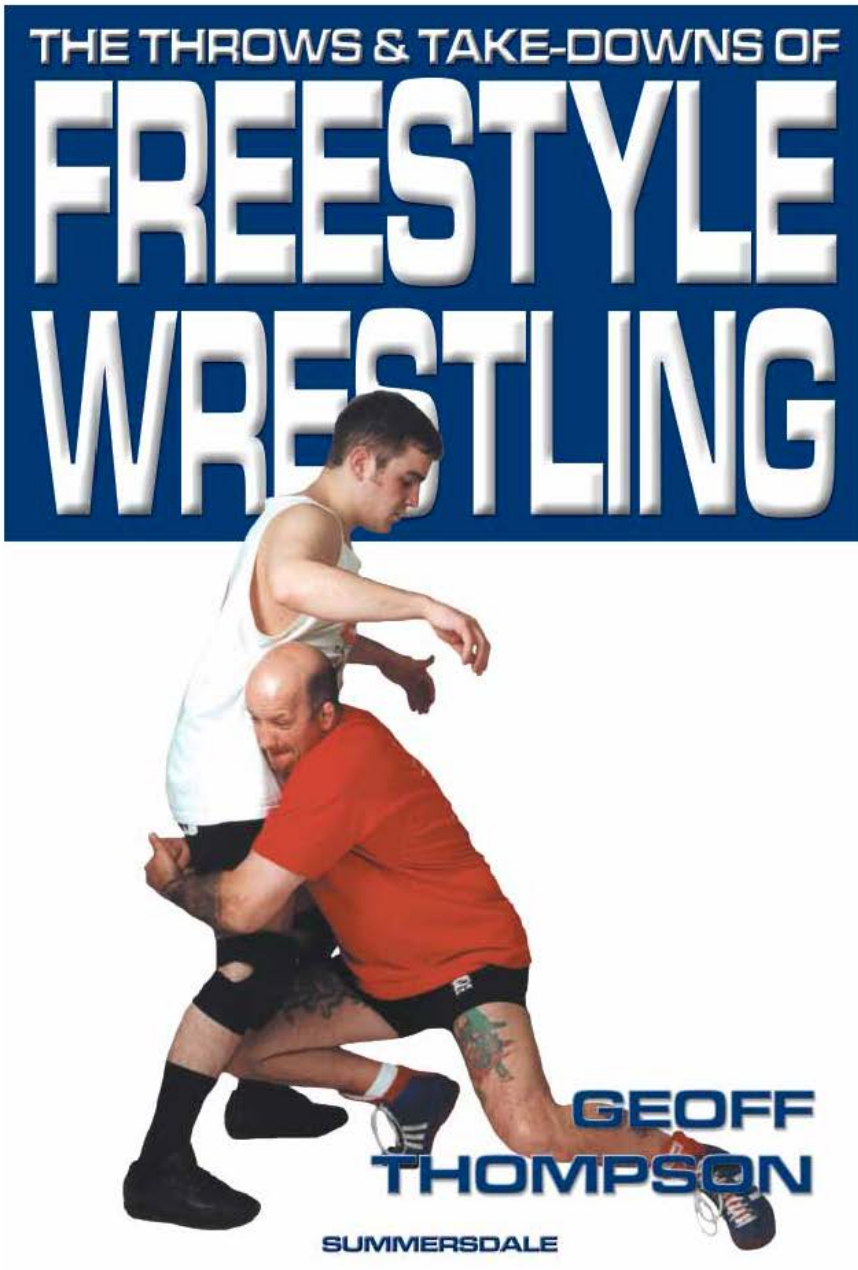
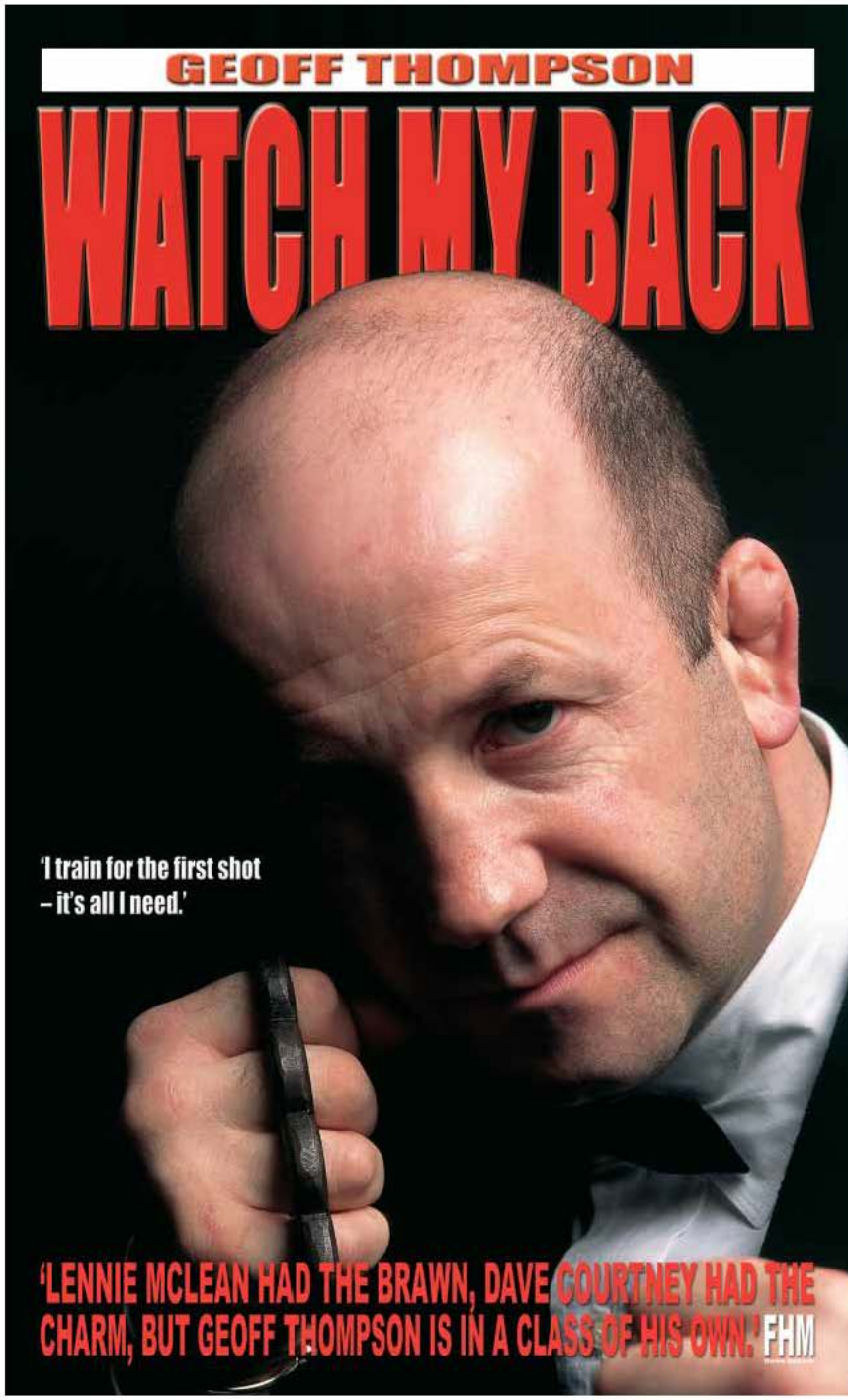


Geoff Thompson's autobiography,
Watch My Back


GEOFF THOMPSON
WATCH MY BACK
'I train for the first shot
– it's all I need.'
'LENNIE MCLEAN HAD THE BRAWN, DAVE COURTNEY HAD THE CHARM, BUT GEOFF THOMPSON IS IN A CLASS OF HIS OWN.' FHM

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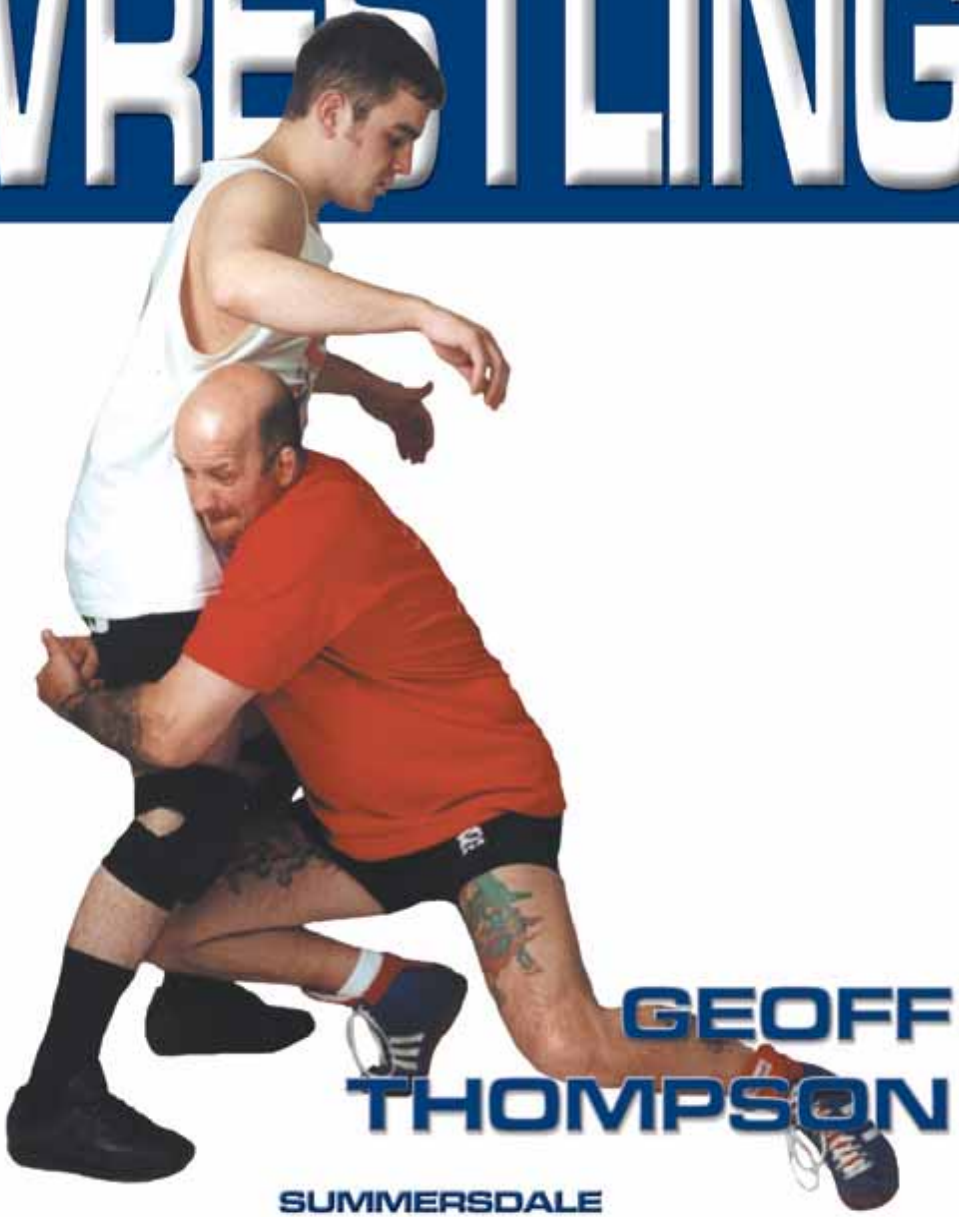
THE THROWS & TAKE-DOWNS OF FREESTYLE WRESTLING



GEOFF THOMPSON

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About the author

Geoff Thompson has written over 20 books and is known worldwide for his bestselling autobiography, *Watch My Back*, about his nine years working as a nightclub doorman. He currently has a quarter of a million books in print. He holds the rank of 6th Dan black belt in Japanese karate, 1st Dan in judo and is also qualified to senior instructor level in various other forms of wrestling and martial arts. He has several scripts for stage and screen in development with Destiny Films.

He has published articles for *GQ* magazine, and has also been featured in *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Arena*, *Front* and *Loaded* magazines, and has appeared many times on mainstream television.
Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine.

Geoff first learned freestyle wrestling at Birmingham Wrestling Club under Jim Ault. He also trained with USA champion Khris Wheelan and studied basic catch wrestling under Dave Turton.

Thanks to Jim Ault and all the members of the Birmingham Wrestling Club.

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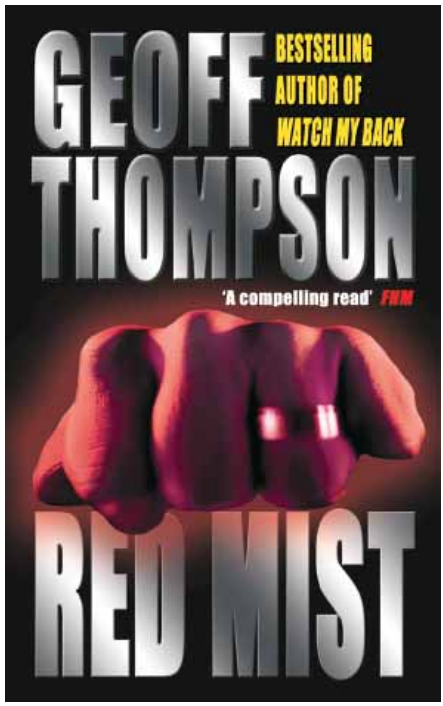

Red Mist

a novel by
Geoff Thompson

'I was dangerous because I had nothing to lose.'

Martin is a man disillusioned with life, and with good reason. Coming from a broken home where violence was the norm, he lives alone in a stinking flat, working as a brickie when he can. The monotony of his existence is dramatically altered when he meets Ginger, who is desperately trying to escape from Mick, her obsessive boyfriend and brutal tormentor.

Keeping Ginger out of harm's way means putting his life on the line as Martin becomes sucked into an underworld of drugs and violence, where arguments are settled with a fist or a bullet.

Gripping, honest, brutal and raw, Geoff Thompson pulls no punches in this explosive first novel that will have you on the edge of your seat from start to finish.

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Introduction

Welcome to the throws and take-downs of freestyle wrestling, thank you for taking the time to read this book. You are probably well aware of the fact that grappling and ground fighting are the current favourites in the world of martial arts, and much has been said of late about the grappling arts. They seem to be experiencing something of a revival, a well-earned and long awaited renaissance. Between 1899 and 1914, proper wrestling (rather than 'show wrestling') was huge, so much so that the period was called the Golden Age of Wrestling. People like Hackeschmidt, Pojelo, Stalislauz Sabisko and the Great Turk actually made their fortunes in the wrestling rings of Europe. The wrestlers of the day were revered, much like the pop stars of today. The Golden Era lost its sheen and all but died off just before, some say because of, the Great War, only to be revived and reborn as show grappling post-war. There was never a better time for wrestling and now, at long last, people are starting to seek it out once again. It is a great art and my hope is that this time

around it will stay for good as a vital part of our martial art heritage.

Perhaps because grappling is not quite so aesthetically pleasing as some of the other arts due to its unembellished demeanour, its devastating potency has consequently been hidden from the untrained eye; people are naturally drawn to the more superfluously spectacular arts that are splashed across our cinema screens. However, the world of combat, and more specifically the world of martial art, has now evolved and many of these so-called spectacular arts have failed to cut the mustard, they have fallen well short of being effective in an arena (the street) that does not suffer mistakes gladly. The gorgeous systems, as I like to call them, are all shine and no substance. The fundamental movements of the grappling arts, so often ignored because of the Plain Jane factor, have come to the fore and proved themselves worthy of the name 'martial'.

Freestyle Wrestling

The rise of the UFC (Ultimate Fight Competition) – cage fighting, reality combat and extreme fighting – has done us all a favour in that they have pointed out to all but the blind the gaping holes in the martial armoury of most contemporary arts. Now, everybody suddenly wants to join a grappling club. This is great in theory because we need to be competent in all ranges of combat so that any leaks can be sealed. The problems start to arise when people abandon their old arts in favour of the new and to the detriment of all the other ranges. Grappling without punching and kicking is just as limited as kicking and punching without grappling. I can understand this to a degree, ground grappling is the flavour right now and everyone (myself included) has been seduced by it. Grappling is the prodigal son of the martial arts that has returned home after so long. And because of the success of grapplers in the UFC style tournaments everyone is desperate to make up for lost time and fill his or her sack with the much needed and oft neglected art of ground fighting. And so they should. I've been trying to tell people this for the last ten years.

Having worked as a nightclub doorman for nine years I always knew that grappling was a vital part of the martial armoury. But learning grappling to the exclusion of all other ranges is suicide and this is where the problems begin. Whilst it is important, even imperative, to include grappling on the curriculum we should never neglect the punching and kicking of our base systems. Especially punching because in a real fight, where the chip shop is your arena, the art of punching is your best chance (and often your only choice) for survival. Go to the ground in this arena and even strangers will kick you in the head when you're down. They can't help themselves' it's human nature. Mix alcohol and blood and stir in a bit of peer pressure and nice people turn into the most despicable creatures. My point is this, what we are ending up with now are martial artists who are training only in grappling, they are abandoning their other disciplines such as punching and kicking so as to concentrate all of their time and energy on the art of floor fighting. This will leave them impaired as martial artists. The fighter that has become a great grappler (because he has watched and was inspired by

the reality tapes) finds himself being punched out in the bar or kicked to pieces outside the chippy.

It's important to grapple, imperative even, but it is also vital that we stay in context. Grapple yes, I'd even insist upon it, but never neglect the other ranges that make to complete the armoury. If one range is neglected all ranges suffer because when you need your skills to save your life you may be judged on the strength of your weakest range. You are, as they say, only as strong as your weakest link.

Equally, with the ground fighting phenomenon there has been little or no notice taken of throwing techniques. Neil Adams always told me that your groundwork was only as strong as your tachi waza. If you are thrown or taken to the floor and end in a bad position you might never get out of it, a good player – hell, even a road digger – won't let up once he has the advantage. In the dojo you might lose the contest, you can live with that; in the street it may be your life you lose if your opponent punches your head into the tarmac while you

are on your back. Most people start their ground fighting from a neutral position. Both fighters with an equal start. Outside the chippy, when the fight goes live, there is no such neutrality and you very much have to make the best of what you are given, that is unless you are the one who controls the take-down. Do you ever watch the prowess of ground fighters and think, 'It's alright fighting on the floor but how do you get there safely from standing?' Me too, that's why I decided to write these books on the art of taking an opponent off his feet with a practised throwing technique.

In this volume we are looking at the throws and take-downs of freestyle wrestling. Having studied this system to instructor level I can vouch for the potency and dynamism of this much-underrated art. When I was training in Birmingham with the freestyle wrestlers I was awed both by their fighting prowess and their gentleness. On my first night at the club I thought, rather arrogantly I might add, that I might do OK; I was strong, I had a lot of real fight experience and I had dabbled in grappling on and off for a number of years. When Jim, the

lovely instructor at the club, asked us to choose a partner I went for the biggest guy in the place. I have to tell you that he pulled me around like I was a baby. He was the European heavyweight champion and he was ******* good. I have never felt so humbled. At one stage he actually picked me up above his head. He could have slammed me down and buried me into the mat quite easily, but he didn't, this gentle giant placed me back on to my feet so that I could have another try. I was awed by the gentleness of this man and the memory has stuck with me ever since.

There are some excellent people at freestyle wrestling, people a lot better than I am; I would advice and recommend that you seek them out and get a bit of one-on-one training, there really is no substitute.

As I have said in all of the books in this series, don't make the throws and take-downs the be all and end all. The same goes with the ground fighting, on its own it is not much use, you need to combine it with all the other physical and

psychological ranges otherwise your jigsaw is going to have vital pieces missing.

A word of warning too: many opponents in a live scenario will not allow you to throw them cleanly, they will panic-grip you like their very lives depend upon it and drag you to the floor with them. If you don't know how to fight on the floor then you are up shit creek.

Don't rely on this book (or any other for that matter) to teach you, it must be used in combination with a good class or partner, there is nothing like a real opponent to perfect the physical technique. Join a good wrestling club. I'd go as far as to say that it cannot be learned properly by book alone. Learn the fundamentals of the technique, then put it under the pressure of a non-compliant partner to perfect. Once you can use the technique on someone that doesn't want to be thrown, then you know you have got it off. Learn to do it under pressure, too much compliance in training weakens you and prevents you from developing the right muscles or

the right technique to make it happen for real. Compliance is only of use when first learning the fundamentals of a technique, once learned, an opponent should offer 100 per cent resistance and he should also try to throw you. There is nothing like the feel of taking a throw when you know that you opponent has done everything in his power to stop you. It builds your confidence no end. You need to fight, you need the free sparring, taking the randori (free-fighting or sparring) out of a system is effectively taking the claws and teeth from a tiger.

I wish you the very best of luck with your practise and thank you for taking the time to read the book.

Chapter One
Balance, Stance, Grip

Lets start with the base. Balance is imperative, you can know every throw in the book but it won't help if you haven't got the balance and stance right. You will have little joy throwing an opponent and you'll be easily thrown when your balance is off. Balance can be developed in technique work but it will only really come together when you get on the mat and have a few fights. You soon learn balance when everyone in the club is trying to flatten the world with your back. When I first started training in Birmingham my balance was way out. As a consequence I was on the floor more times than the cleaner's mop. I got tired of climbing back to my feet. But that was good, that's how I learned. If you are in a class where you are not getting thrown then you are in the wrong class. It's how you grow; and as I said, there is no better incentive to learn than being thrown around like a paper bag in a storm night after night.

Freestyle Wrestling

Because freestyle wrestling allows attacks above and below the waist (in Greco they only allow attacks above the waist) the players tend to stand very low, certainly lower than they would if they were practising Greco or judo. Because they are crouched so low many of the traditional throws, as seen in judo for instance, are very hard to pull off. Subsequently the freestyle wrestler tends to aim below the waist, specifically at the legs, with the majority of his attacks.

While fighting for a grip, good players usually work in a low straddle stance, only moving into the wedge position (left or right lead 45-degree stance) when preparing to attack.

Holding this stance can be very tiring on the thighs, but that's why the wrestlers are so well conditioned: it is worth the pain. These are just the fundamentals; it's best to practise the right way from the very beginning; if you can get yourself into a good club – even better. I do hope that this book will act as an appetiser for you to really get into this fantastic art. Of all the martial arts I have practised, I'd have to say that the grappling arts have been the most satisfying.

In all books of this genre I work on the presumption that you are working from a left lead stance (this can be reversed of course). This being the case, you should stand in a small 45-degree wedge stance with knees bent and relaxed.

In this position your weight is directly over a point just behind the heel of your front foot. The knees are flexed and your back is essentially upright and almost perpendicular to the floor. The head is up and in direct line with the spine. The shoulders are parallel to the floor.

Freestyle Wrestling

In all forms of fighting, balance is everything. The wedge stance maximises your balance so that you can shoot in and throw your opponent. It is also pivotal to have your balance right so that you can react quickly when your opponent tries to shoot in and throw you. The only time that the stance should change is when you enter to take a throw or defend a throw. After you attack – or are attacked – immediately revert back to the stance. If you successfully throw the opponent you have the option to follow him down to ground or stay on your feet. In the sporting arena you would probably follow the opponent to the floor and fight from there. On the street, going to the floor would not be recommended – staying vertical would. Your choice.

Grip around the opponent's right triceps with your left hand and grip the back of the opponent's neck with your right.

Freestyle Wrestling

This is the basic stance and grip to take when looking for a throw. As the play becomes more advanced you will have to fight for your grip, an opponent will not just allow you to take advantage. Good grip fighters spend a great proportion of the match fighting for the dominant grip. When I wrestle I aim to dominate the grip right from the off. Once I have a dominant grip it is pretty easy for me to take a throw and very difficult for my opponent to do anything other than defend. Grip is so important. If you get a chance to look at my videos of the throws and take-downs this is demonstrated very clearly. It took me nearly a year to get the grips right. Once they fell into place my whole game improved no end. When entering for a throw the grip will naturally change according to which throw you attempt.

In a street scenario you rarely get to choose the grip you start with, though once you perfect the grip work you can change your holds at will. Initially you may have to take the grip that is available and then, if it is not one that suits you, change it for one that does. Once the grips and throws have

been mastered you will be able to take an opponent over from any grip and from any position. For now though, be content to work with the fundamentals until such time as you feel more competent.

Good grip work can enable light players to control and destroy heavy players. It may seem unlikely but, honestly, when I was at the wrestling club some of the smaller players tied me in knots with superior technique, even though I often weighed several stone more than them.

In the street you are very unlikely to face an expert grappler, so for this arena you just need to make sure that you can hold your nerve and apply very basic techniques very well. This comes from heavy drilling and supervision, also pressure training where you are pushed to your physical and mental limitations.

Grip and stance in place you are now equipped to break the balance of the opponent and set him up for a throw. On a

street level we are unlikely to encounter anyone with great balance although they may have an innate instinct to stay vertical – no one is just going to let you throw them. On a dojo level however, you will be working with players trained in the art of not being thrown and a good wrestler is very difficult to off-balance and harder still to throw. I watched Kevin Darkus (USA champion) fighting at the Birmingham club with one of the local internationals one evening. I was awed. It was like poetry in motion. Kevin looked like a gymnast as he twisted and turned his way out of throws that seemed impossible to escape. Good wrestlers like Kevin are hugely flexible and, to be honest, almost impossible to throw (unless they let you, which they sometimes do). Similarly, when I fought with Neil Adams in judo I found it impossible to even get a grip on him unless he let me (which, again, he did). His defence and grip work were set at an incredible pitch.

Breaking the opponent's balance is the precursor to throwing him. In fact, with a player of equal skill you are very unlikely to throw him at all without breaking balance first.

Basically, breaking the opponent's balance is pretty much the same in all grappling styles; you employ pulling or pushing actions, or you attempt to feign one throw to open him up for another.

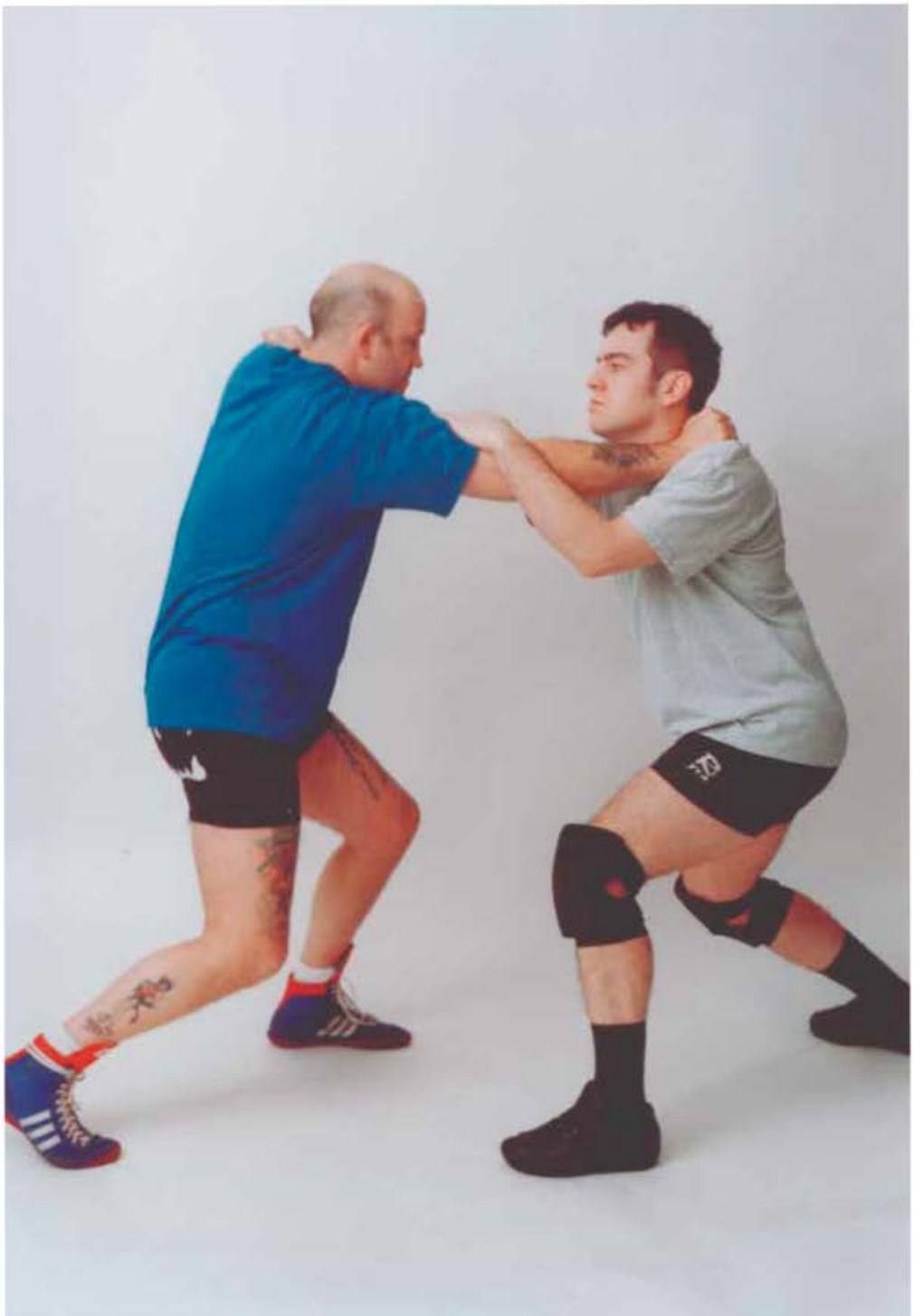
You can break the opponent's balance by pushing or pulling the opponent to the left rear, directly behind, to the right rear or directly to his right or left. Alternatively you can pull the opponent directly towards you, to your left or right rear or directly to the right or left. You can also pull him downward. Any one of these actions will force the opponent to move, hopefully out of stance and off balance, and when he does you can execute a throw.

Another opportunity to off balance an opponent and throw him is when he makes an attack (a throw or punch, for example). As he makes his entry you take advantage of his stance change to take him over. All throwing actions rely on feeling and going with the energy. This is something that has

to be felt. It is difficult to relate it as clearly as I'd like via the pages of a book.

Stiff Arming

Stiff arming is recognised in most forms of grappling and, to be honest, it is really hard when you are first learning to get past a stiff armer who is frightened to death of being thrown.



It usually occurs with over-muscular, strong (but with no technique), less skilful or very scared opponents. These are often the exact types you will meet in a street encounter. They literally hold you to the spot with their strength, normally out of sheer panic. They don't even attack or defend, they just hold on, and if you are not used to dealing with them they can kill your technique dead. Dealing with stiff armers requires good grip work and a good sense of flow; use their strength against them by going with the flow of energy. In a street encounter it's a little simpler: just whack them in the head (or kick them in the shin or groin) and it distracts their strength away from their grip and to the area that you attack. This allows you a way through. In old judo this was called 'blow before throw'. You would use a strike, or blow, to open the opponent up for a throw.

Obviously in most sport-grappling this would be frowned upon so it goes without saying that you should refrain from such behaviour (unless of course the referee isn't looking). The blow before throw will break the balance of the stiff

armer, creating a window of opportunity, then you can bang in the throw.

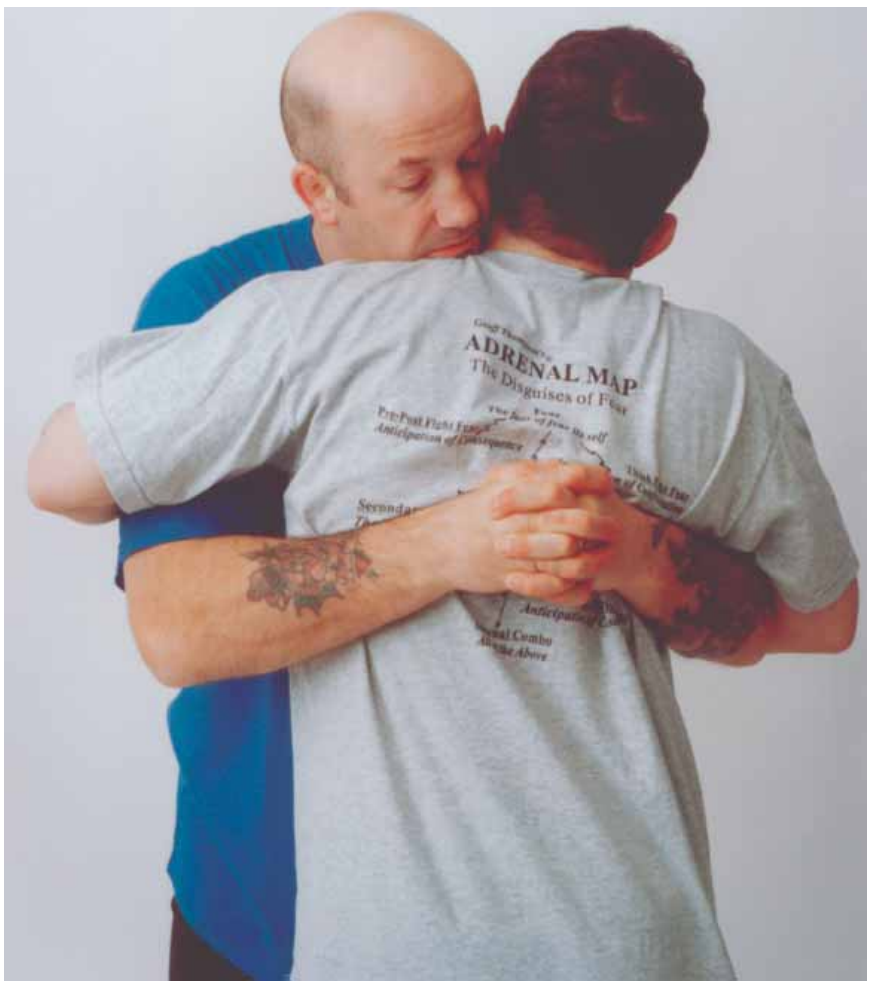
In the street you generally encounter fighters with little or no clothing to grab (nudist camps are a nightmare I have to tell you, though in these circumstances there are other things you can grab to aid the throw. Say no more. Maybe I should do a book on the art of fighting nudes? *Bare-naked Boxing* perhaps or *Self-defence Against the Streaker*? The videos would go a treat. Perhaps not! I am going off on a tangent again).

Where was I? Oh yes. Greco and freestyle come into their own on the street because the wrestling type throws use the opponent's limbs as opposed to the clothing to make the throw. From my experience of working with several systems of grappling, the wrestling take-downs work magnificently in the street for this reason. They need no appendage other than natural hooks like the arms, neck, waist and legs. Some of the Greco snatches and freestyle leg take-downs come into their own in these scenarios.

Grips

Here are a few of the grips used in freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling.

Note: Never intertwine your fingers, when you try to pull them apart it is very easy to dislocate your fingers or knuckles.



Grab Finger Grip

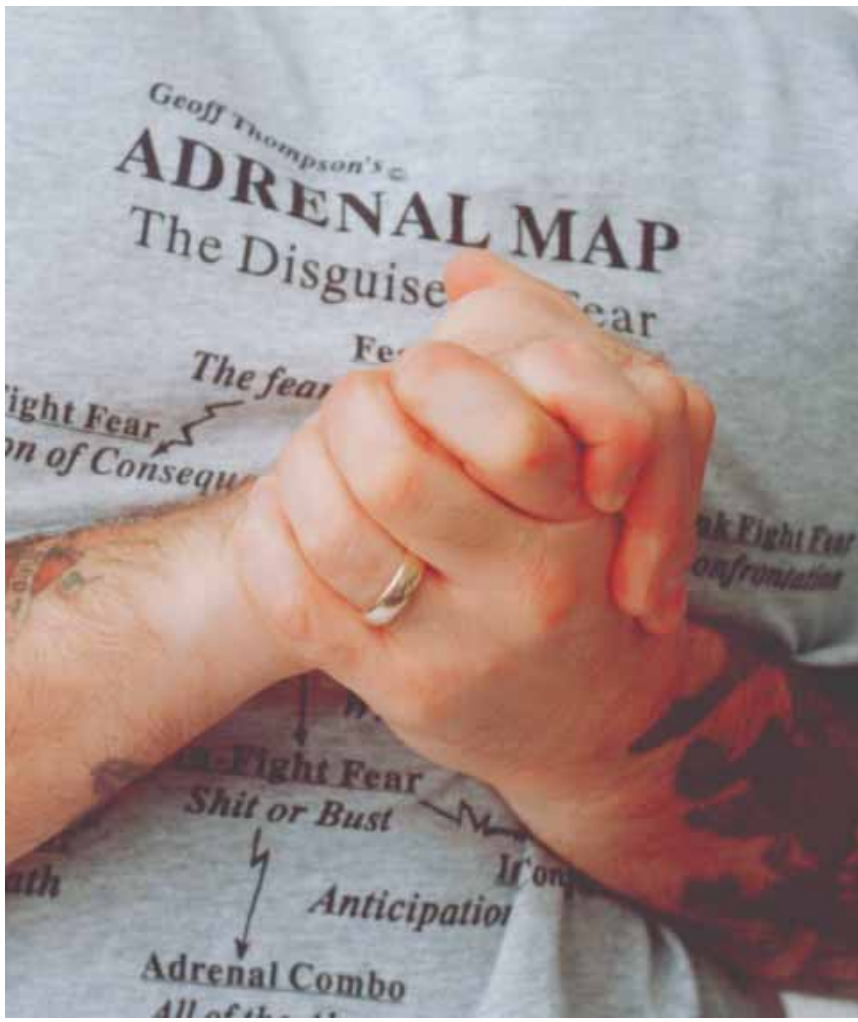
Grab the four fingers of your left hand with the four fingers of your right hand. Lock them by closing your fists together firmly. Pull on all four fingers of both hands at the same time to ensure the lock.

Wrist Grip

Grab your left wrist with your right hand (or vice versa) with your thumb and forefinger around your left wrist.

Grab Back of Hand and Wrist

Grab the blade side of your left wrist with your right hand. Your two smallest fingers should be around the wrist, the bigger fingers on the blade side of the hand. Your thumb should be on the same side as the fingers.



Palm to Palm Grip

Place your left palm on your right palm and clasp both hands around each other.

Palm to Bicep Grip

Grab your right bicep with your left hand; bend the left arm to make the grip or lock strong. This lock is used especially for face or arm bars.

Freestyle Wrestling

It is important that you have a pull around with an opponent (preferably lots of different opponents) to get used to balance, grip and entries for the throws; the more time you are on the mat the better.

Chapter Two
The Cross Buttock

The cross buttock appears in nearly all forms of stand up wrestling and the technique differs very little from one style to the next. The main difference in freestyle is the fact that the throw is usually taken from a headlock as opposed to a waist grip, and of course there is no clothing to aid in the throw because the wrestlers wear only a leotard.

Where it also varies is in the fact that the wrestlers over-commit their bottom when executing the throw. With the judo and ju-jitsu people, the bottom or hips tend to be square with the opponent's lower abdomen, and the throw is taken over the hip. Wrestlers, however, prefer to push the hip past the lower abdomen to the other side of the opponent and then throw them over the small of the back (see illustrations). Personally I feel uncomfortable with both, the hip throw does not suit me at all, but that doesn't mean that it will not work for you. It certainly does for many of my training partners.

Freestyle Wrestling

When I employed this technique on the door, and I did a few times, it was always the version from the headlock that I used.

Grab the opponent in a headlock position and turn your back and buttocks into his lower stomach and past centre. Bend deeply at the knees and, using your right headlock grip, pull the opponent over the small of your back and slam him to the floor.

If the opponent locks off here and you can't throw him over your back then try dropping quickly to your knees and throwing him from here. The momentum from the drop itself is usually enough to take him over.

Alternatively, if the opponent locks you off and you are struggling to take the throw, prop your right leg across the front of the opponent's right leg and change the hip throw to a body drop. The transition from one to the other should be very quick and you should drop your levels slightly so as to take the opponent off balance.

This throw can also be taken with a waist grip as opposed to a head grip. Simply wrap your right arm around the opponent's waist and turn your back and buttocks into his lower stomach and past centre. Bend deeply at the knees and pull the opponent over the small of your back and slam him to the floor.

Again, if the opponent locks off here and you can't throw him over your back then try dropping quickly to your knees and throwing him from here.

Freestyle Wrestling

Yet another alternative to aid the throw is to take the grip under the opponent's right armpit: in the usual way turn your back and buttocks into his lower stomach and past centre. Bend deeply at the knees and pull the opponent, using your right headlock grip, over the small of your back and slam him to the floor.

If the opponent resists the throw by spreading his legs and pulling backwards you can counter his counter by going with the energy and thrust your right leg between his legs and behind his right leg, using it to trip him backwards. As you trip him, drive him back by pushing off your support leg.

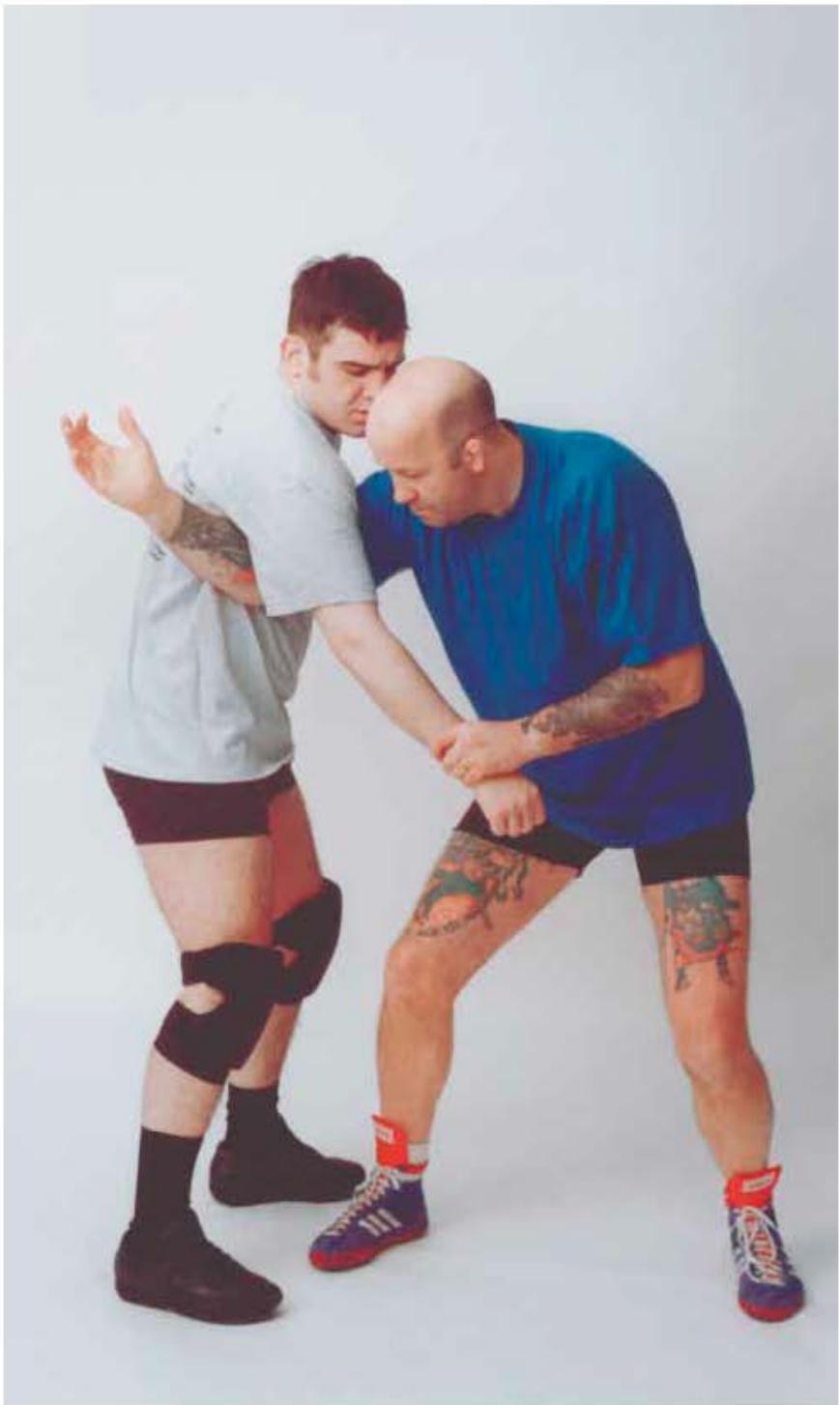
Back view:

If he reacts to stop your initial hip throw by forcing his bodyweight slightly to the front, you can finish the throw by adding a sweeping harai goshi type movement with your right leg. Sweep your right leg up and to the side of his right thigh and sweep him over and on to his back.

Chapter Three
The Flying Mare (Shoulder Throw)

The shoulder throw, or flying mare, is another technique common in all forms of vertical grappling arts. The unique thing about the un-jacketed wrestling systems is that they take the throw without the use of an appendage, using only the limbs of the opponent.

Grab the opponent's right wrist with your left hand. Turn your back into the opponent's belly and thrust your right arm high under his right armpit. Bend at the knees so that you are below the opponent's centre of gravity and then straighten your legs, pulling him on to and over your shoulder. Use your right and left arm to pull him over and slam him to the floor.



The Flying Mare (Shoulder Throw)

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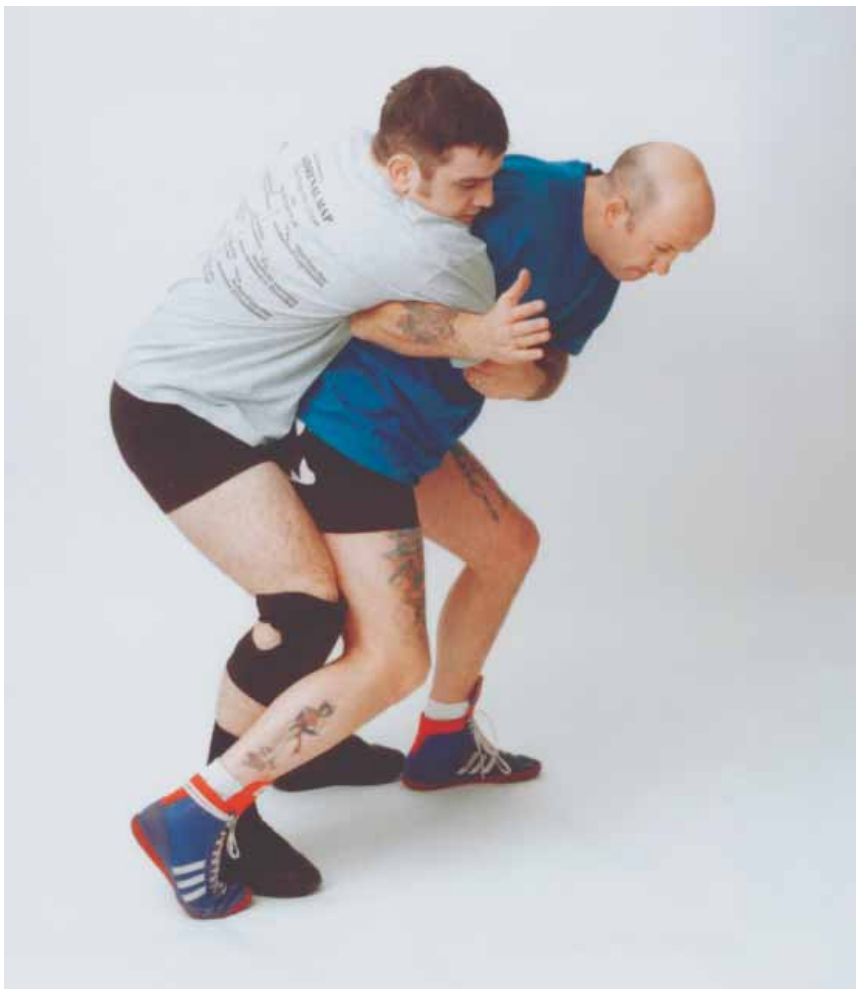
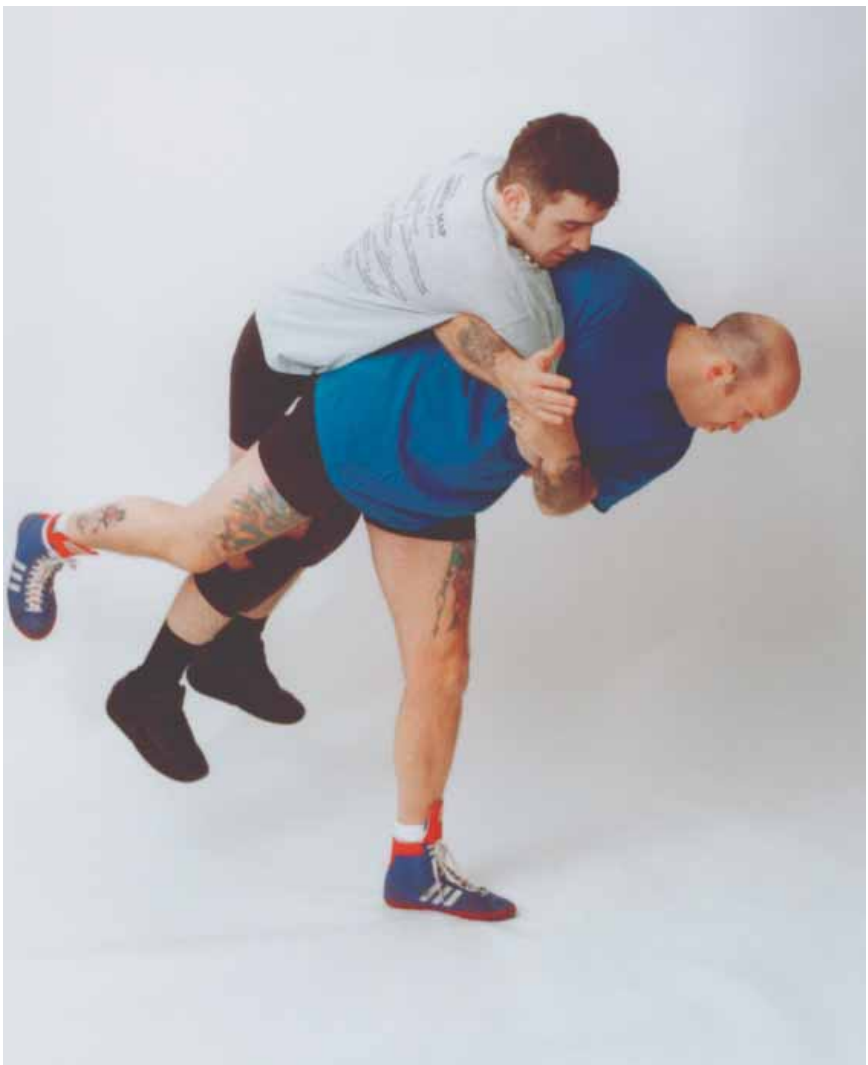


If the opponent resists the throw by spreading his legs and pulling backwards you can counter his counter by going with the energy and thrust your right leg between his legs and behind his right leg, using it to trip him backwards. As you trip him, drive him back by pushing off your support leg. Be sure to lock his right arm off with your left when you take the throw.

Back view:

The Flying Mare (Shoulder Throw)

If he reacts to stop your initial throw by forcing his bodyweight slightly to the front, you can finish the throw by adding a sweep with your right leg. Sweep your right leg up and to the side of his right thigh and then sweep him over and on to his back.



Another alternative to him blocking the initial throw is to take an outside reaping throw. Twist your body quickly to face the opponent, hooking your right leg on the outside of his right leg and sweeping him backwards with an outside reap.

Chapter Four
Standing Arm Roll

The standing arm roll is a typical freestyle (or Greco) throw, again utilising the opponent's limbs to the full. This kind of technique is more applicable to the street due to the fact that we rarely get anything of any substance, other than the limbs, to grab and use as an appendage.

Grab the opponent's right wrist with your left hand, turn into him and lash your right arm right across the front of his face and over his right arm, pulling it tightly under your armpit. As you pull the opponent forward, bend your left leg and drive your right leg in front of his right ankle and body drop him over your leg by pulling hard with your right and left arms.

Freestyle Wrestling

Chapter Five
Double Leg Pick-up

Leg throws are the mainstream of freestyle wrestling and if there is one thing that they are famous for, it is the explosive and devastating shoot leg attacks.

With the double leg pick-up or take down, start by thrusting the opponent's arms up and above your head as he reaches to grip. Lunge forward and low with your left leg. Wrap your arms around the upper thighs of the opponent, your head to his left (or right) thigh. As you pick him off the floor, turn directly behind you to your left and simultaneously wrap your left arm around his waist, tipping the opponent's head towards the ground. Slam him to the mat.

Freestyle Wrestling

GEOFF THOMPSON'S THROWS AND TAKE-DOWNS

If the opponent reacts to your pick-up by reaching over your back, continue through with your right leg and wrap your left heel behind his left leg and heel trip him to his back.

This, and of course all the throws that you want to make your own, needs to be drilled as a separate throw and then as secondary throws to counter the opponent's reaction should the first one fail. If you drill the throws enough, eventually you will automatically react and go with whatever energy the opponent gives you.

Chapter Six
Single Leg Take-down

What is important in the early stages of learning a throw is to get the basic mechanics of the take-down. Later the set up, reacting to energy or creating and then reacting to energy, becomes more important. This is especially so when fighting against another skilled wrestler. In the street scenario, which I am more concerned with, the set up is not as important as the mechanics of the throw, because outside the novice wrestler will automatically give you the energy for one throw or another. In the gym it becomes a game of chess, often working several moves ahead of yourself at all times using draws and feigns and often making sacrifices to create the energy for a decisive take-down.

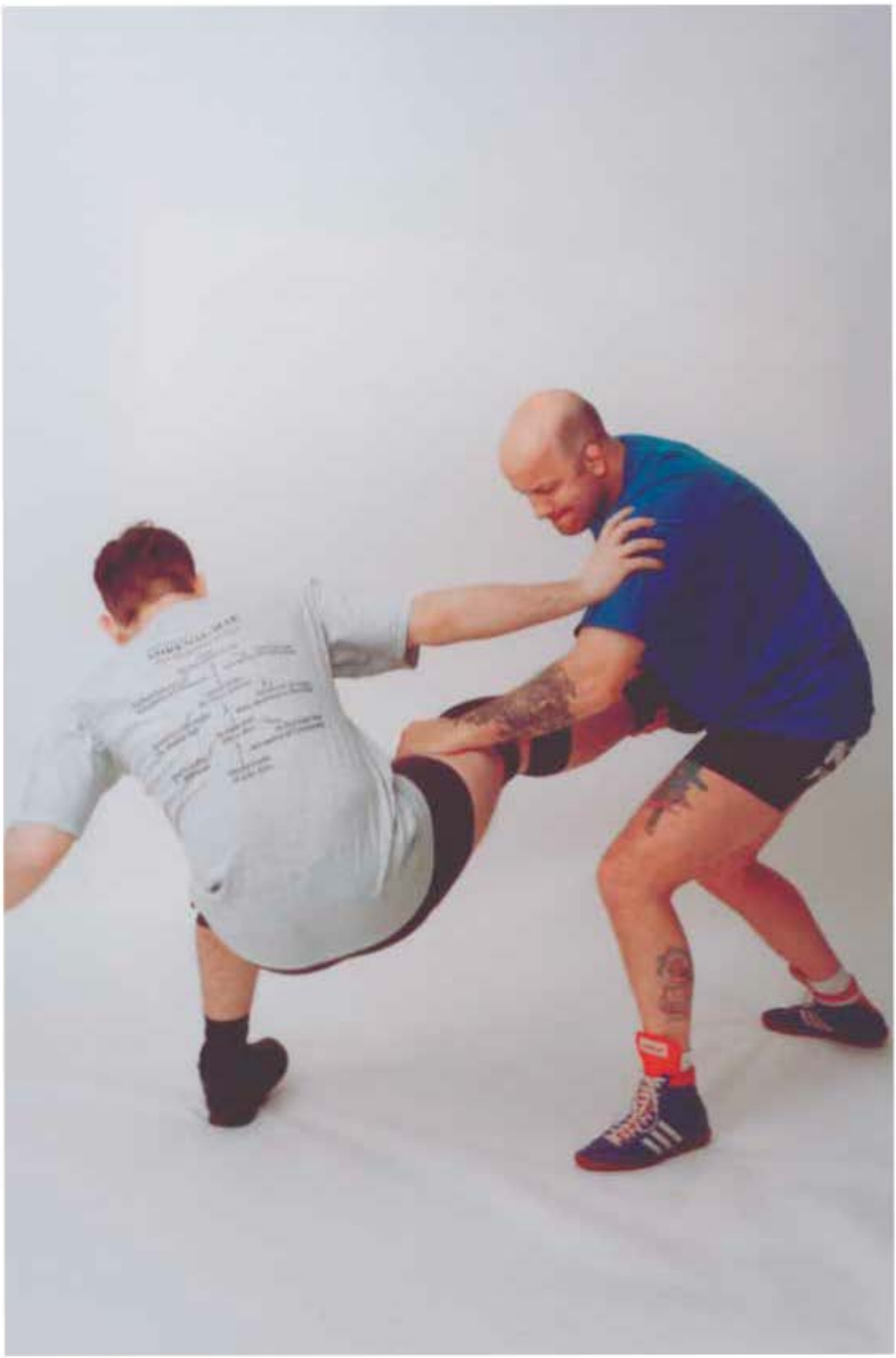
Single leg take-downs are my favourite in the freestyle system and, although they do expend a lot of energy, they work very well.

Freestyle Wrestling

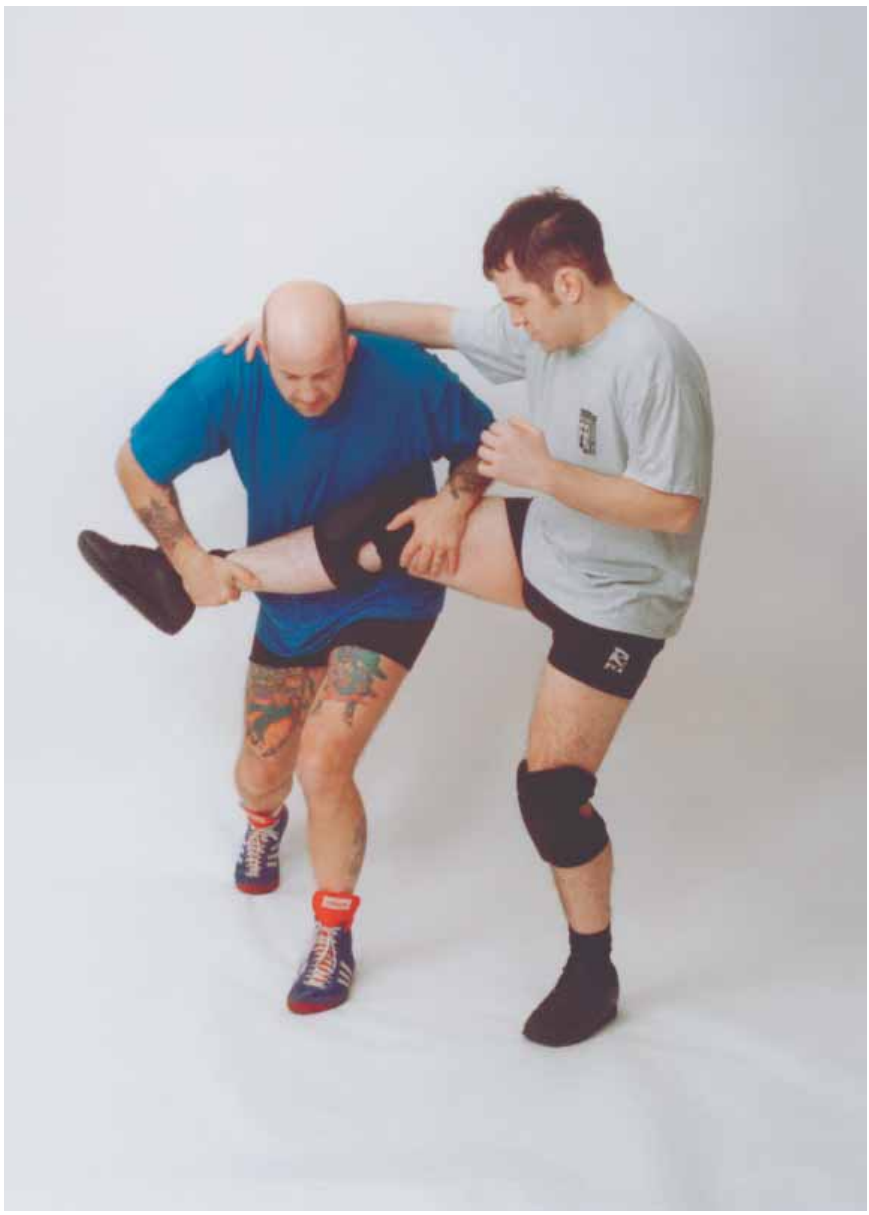
From the bicep control grip, lung forward and low with your left (or right) leg and pick the opponent's right leg up at the back of the knee. Allow your right hand to slide to the back of the opponent's heel and place your left palm on his thigh. Pull the leg back with the right hand as you force down and around to your left with the left palm to take the opponent over.

Freestyle Wrestling

Single Leg Take-down



If the opponent reacts by leaning forward and grabbing under your left arm, shoot behind him by bringing your right leg to the rear and force the opponent over on to his belly.



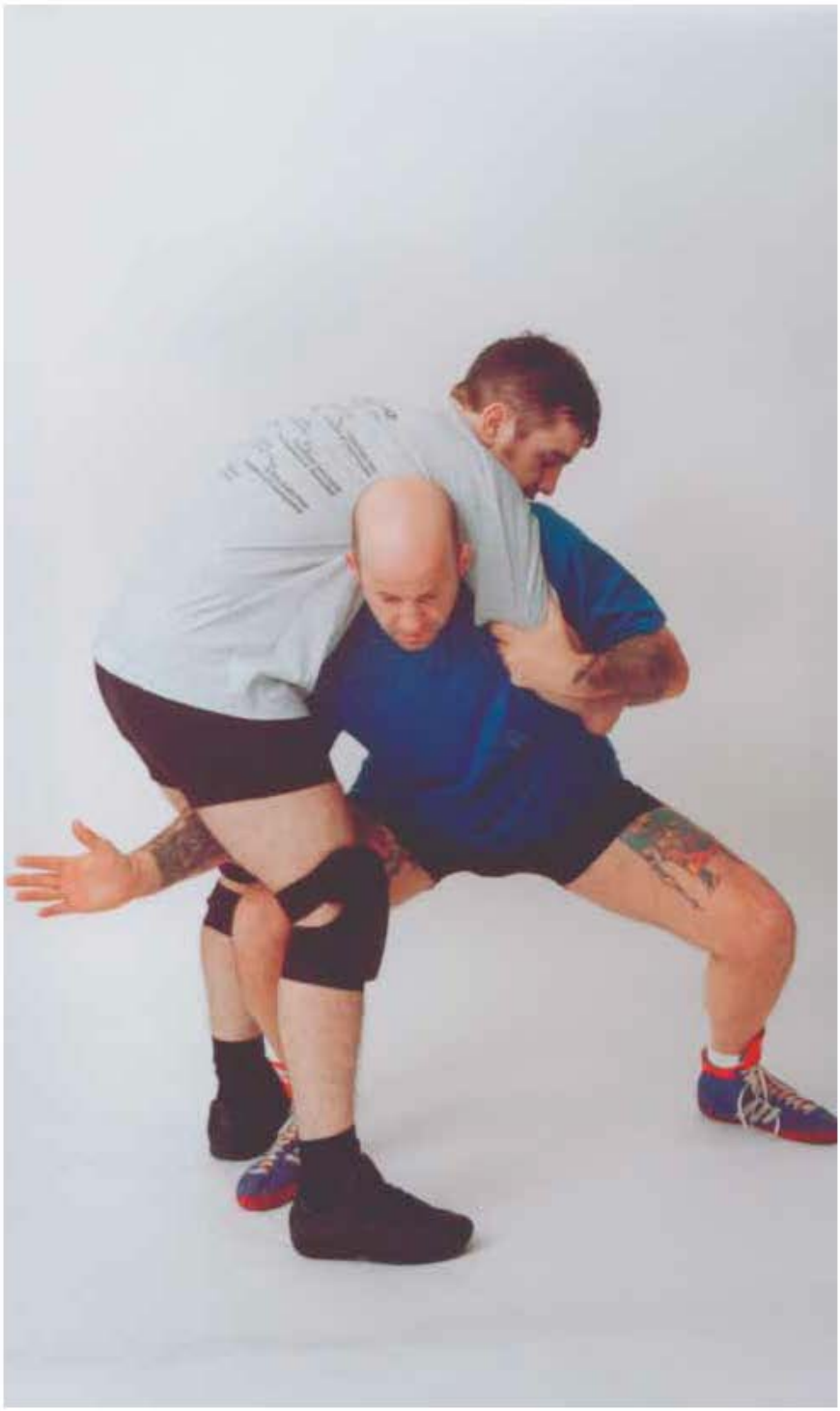
Again, drill the techniques independently and then in combination until you can feel the right energy for the right throw.

Chapter Seven
The Fireman's Carry

The fireman's carry can be employed either standing or kneeling. I will start by demonstrating the standing version and then go on to the kneeling version and the secondary attacks to the opponent's expected defence.

Duck under the opponent's arms and drive your right leg between his legs. Crouch so that your legs are at maximum bend and your back is still straight; simultaneously wrap your right arm around the back of the opponent's right knee (or alternatively fire the arm between his leg and up his back). Straighten your legs and stand up with the opponent on your back, and as you do so, slam him on to his back.

Freestyle Wrestling



The Fireman's Carry

Freestyle Wrestling

An alternative to rolling the opponent over your shoulder is to throw him either directly forward, over your head and on to his back, or directly backwards on to his back. Either will suffice.

For the kneeling fireman's lift the entry is the same. Duck under the opponent's arms and drive your right leg between his legs, wrapping your right arm around the back of his left knee. Land between the opponent's legs, on your knees and facing your own left. Your back should be poker-straight. Tip and roll the opponent over your left shoulder and on to his back.

The Fireman's Carry

If the opponent reacts to the kneeling fireman's lift by sprawling, tighten the grip that you have on his right arm and barrel roll to your left so that the opponent is thrown on to his back.

Side view:

Conclusion

That concludes the throws and take-downs of freestyle wrestling. I hope that you have enjoyed and learned from this text. As I have stated in all of the books in this series, this is not a comprehensive text on freestyle throws and take-downs, neither is it meant to be representative of the whole freestyle system; it is simply a collection of the throws and take-downs from this Olympic art that I like and find most effective. Hopefully, at the very least, it will encourage you to seek out a wrestling club near you so that you can study the art in greater detail. There is no substitute for a good teacher and a club full of willing training partners.

As with anything worth its salt, these techniques will not just magically happen because you have read a book on wrestling; they will need conscientious and arduous practise to make them your own. And if you wish to employ them in reality combat (the ring of the street) then you will surely have to make them just that.

I should also mention that, in regards to a real encounter in the street, I recommend flight above fight. Always walk away rather than fight if the circumstances allow. Violence is not the answer in the majority of cases and a physical response should only be undertaken if no other option is open to you. I always try to avoid confrontational situations as much as possible. I employ verbal dissuasion if I can't escape, and loophole or posture if dissuasion has failed me. Having been in hundreds of affrays in my lifetime I can categorically tell you that it is a stronger, braver and more confident man that walks away.

If this is all impossible and an attack is imminent then don't wait to be attacked, attack first and then escape. Your main artillery in this circumstance is nearly always your hands (punching or striking) and any form of close range grappling should be relegated to being a support system. For more information on the other ranges of combat and the realities of street combat please refer to my other texts, some of which are advertised in the back of this book.

Thank you for taking the time to read this book and good luck in your search for better defence.

God bless.

Geoff Thompson 2001

THE THROWS & TAKE-DOWNS OF GRECO-ROMAN WRESTLING

GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

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Important note

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

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Geoff Thompson has written over 20 books and is known worldwide for his bestselling autobiography, *Watch My Back*, about his nine years working as a nightclub doorman. He currently has a quarter of a million books in print. He holds the rank of 6th Dan black belt in Japanese karate, 1st Dan in judo and is also qualified to senior instructor level in various other forms of wrestling and martial arts. He has several scripts for stage and screen in development with Destiny Films.

He has published articles for *GQ* magazine, and has also been featured in *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Arena*, *Front* and *Loaded* magazines, and has appeared many times on mainstream television.
Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine.

Geoff was trained to instructor level at Greco-Roman Wrestling by USA Greco all-state champion Kris Wheelan.

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Thank you to Jim Ault and all the members of the Birmingham Wrestling Club,
also a big thanks to Kris Wheelan.

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Introduction

The first time I experienced Greco was under the watchful and expert eye of master wrestler Kris Wheelan, my very good friend from the USA. I'd been training in freestyle at Birmingham Wrestling Club under the auspices of Jim Ault and had expressed an interest in this somewhat forgotten art. He suggested that I travel to Manchester, to the wrestling academy there, and train under Mr. Wheelan who would take me through a level one instructor course. Normally when I study an art I find myself sifting through the material offered and thinking, 'Would this work in a real fight?' Normally I am disappointed by what I see and end up disregarding up to 95 per cent of the material on offer. Whilst a lot of it may be practical within the periphery of a sport, or even the dojo, it doesn't normally stand up to what I believe and know to be the pressure of a real encounter in the street. Not so with Greco. When I first encountered the techniques on offer my initial thought was not the usual 'Will this work?' rather it was, 'These techniques are scary! Do I really want to learn something that has the potential to break necks and split spines?' It was frightening and so applicable to a real encounter.

So it is with these words of warning that I offer this text as a reference book only. Some of the movements involved are recommended only under the tightest supervision. Join a good club and learn under the watchful eye of an expert.

Grappling, as I am sure you are aware, is the current flavour. In the martial arts everyone and their dog is enlisting in grappling classes in their bid to become the next Rigan Machado or Gracie. And in that sense I don't blame them. I was one of the many who fell under a similar spell in the seventies when a Bruce Lee film hit the screen and started a martial avalanche, the effects of which are still being felt some thirty years on. They say that things come in cycles, and it's true. The last time real wrestling was this popular was at the beginning of the century, between 1898 and 1914, when some of the greatest athletes in history donned their wrestler trunks and took their place in the Golden Age of Wrestling. The Great War was probably responsible for its early demise. Since that time it appears that grappling has almost disappeared from the public gaze. Judo was still there of course but, for some reason, people didn't see judo as the potent art it really is. They mistakenly thought of it as merely a sport. For those

of us who have practised the art of judo we know better. I'd go as far as to say that judo is the best kept secret in the martial arts. But we were talking about wrestling (I see them all as wrestling, some jacketed and some not) and specifically the Golden Age where people like George Hackenschmidt (primarily a Greco fighter) brought this often maligned art to the world stage. Then there was Karl Pojelo of course, another great Greco fighter who was invited to America by President Eisenhower to test his wares against six of the top Japanese karate exponents of the time. Pojelo took each of them on in succession, and using only his wrestling skills he beat them all within minutes.

For those in the know the grappling arts have always been held in awe, the uninitiated are just catching up. Why are people suddenly catching on? Well, I've been trying to plug the cross training in Britain for the last ten years, and hopefully people like myself, Peter Consterdine and Rick Young have contributed to the renaissance, but it was the introduction of wrestling via the UFC (Ultimate Fight Competition – cage fighting, reality combat and extreme fighting) that really caught the imagination of the martial arts world. After one viewing

of the Gracies (a legendary ju-jitsu family from Brazil, now residing in the USA) taking on opponents from every and any system and beating them almost effortlessly, everybody suddenly wanted to start a grappling class. Which is great, but unfortunately they did so to the detriment of their own arts and other valuable, nay vital ranges (and not unlike the Kung-Fu craze in the seventies and the Ninjitsu craze in the eighties). I can understand this to a degree, ground grappling has been missing from martial arts for so long, and the UFC type tournaments advertise grappling supremacy so well that it is natural that people should be drawn to it.

My time as a nightclub doorman taught me the necessity of close range grappling. From my first night on the pavement arena I knew how vital grappling was as a part of the martial armoury. You notice that I say 'as a part' and not 'as a whole.' Grappling is a vital means to an end but is not the end in itself. This is where the problems begin. Whilst it is important, even imperative, to include grappling on the curriculum it should not be to the detriment of the other ranges. With the advent of reality fighting, shoot and vale tudo, martial artists are leaving behind all their hard earned base to pursue a

knowledge of grappling, most are abandoning their other disciplines, such as punching and kicking, to concentrate all their time and energy on the art of floor fighting. Not good if your intention is self-defence because outside the chippy, where the arena is concrete and the opponents come in groups, and armed, the floor is absolutely the last, and the wrong place to take a fight. A good 3-second fighter or an ambush fighter will take most trained fighters out of the game – no matter how good their ground fighting – before they are even aware that there was a game. And the fellow that goes to ground to take a strangle will likely get his head kicked in by the mates of his opponent. It is an arena that does not tolerate mistakes. So I think that it is vital to keep things in context when you practise Greco, or any art, it is just a part of the jigsaw; it is not the whole picture.

The main reason that I decided to write this series of books and make the instructional videos on throws and take-downs is because people are going mad for ground fighting, but they are taking little or no notice of how to get to the ground in the first place. You don't just end up there. You are either thrown down, dragged down, kicked down, or (if you are in

charge of the affray) perhaps you have thrown your opponent to the floor. Much of what happens on the floor is dictated by how you got there in the first place. If you got there because you were knocked or thrown there it is entirely probable that your opponent will be in a position to stand back up and kick your head in. Or he may stay on the floor and, with no training at all in the martial arts, bite your ear or nose off. Do you practise these techniques in your dojo? Or do you, like most, start from a neutral position and disallow biting, butting, blinding and buddies (multiple attackers)? Normally, in the dojo scenario, both fighters are given an equal start; in a real situation there is no such neutrality and you very much have to make the best of what you are given, that is unless you are the one who controls the take-down (and this is my point and the reason for this book).

If you control the take-down then you get to control the ground (or not, if you decide not to hit the deck and run like the wind blows, as Forest Gump says). All of my ground fighting, both in and out of the dojo, is wholly determined by my standing work. I take people over with simple throw, like the ones in this text, and then, in transition from standing to

ground, secure my position as soon as we hit the floor. Once I get the advantage – which the throw allows me to do – I never let my opponent back into the fight. It is also easier to attack on the floor than it is to defend. So it is vital that you get the throws off. The rule of thumb is that your groundwork is only as good as your standing. In this volume we will look at the throws and take-downs of Greco-Roman wrestling, of all the throwing arts this one is my favourite and, I believe, the most applicable for the street.

There was a lovely story about Bert Asarati, a great old wrestler from the fifties. After retiring from the ring Bert took to looking after nightclub doors for clubs in London. One night there was a terrible row and Bert was forced to use some of his wrestling skills (mostly Greco based), eventually flooring several would-be antagonists. One of the chaps he floored was unconscious for several hours and had to be taken to hospital where the police (who knew that Bert had done the damage) waited to interview him about the incident. When he finally regained consciousness looking groggy and sore the policeman said, 'What did Bert hit you with?'

The fellow thought for a second then replied, 'Me mate, he hit me with me mate!' Apparently Mr Asarati had picked one guy up for a body-slam just as the other came into attack him so he hit the one fellow with the head of the other (ouch).
I digress. Having studied wrestling and made it work in live situations I can really vouch for this magnificent system.
As with any one range please don't make the throws and take-downs of Greco more than they are, it is only a small piece of the jigsaw.

The very best of good luck with your training and enjoy the book.

Chapter One
Balance, Stance, Grip

Because Greco-Roman wrestling disallows any throw below the waist the players tend to stand a little higher then they would if they were practising freestyle wrestling, judo or sombo which does allow throws to the legs. Because they do not have to defend their legs from attack there is a tendency to be more vertical.

While fighting for a good grip the players usually work in a straddle-type stance, moving into the wedge position (left or right 45-degree stance) when setting up an attack.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

Presuming that you are working from a left lead stance (this can be reversed if you want to lead with your right) you should stand in a small 45-degree wedge stance, bent only slightly at the knees and relaxed, as illustrated.

In this position your weight is directly over a point just behind the heel of your front foot. The knees are flexed and your back is essentially upright and almost perpendicular to the floor. The head is up and in direct line with the spine. The shoulders are parallel to the floor.

The wedge stance gives you balance and offers a base from which you can throw or defend. It is important to maintain this stance if you want to stop yourself from being thrown. Never allow your feet to meet in the middle and don't over extend your stance. This will all come with mat practise. In the art of wrestling balance is everything.

Grip around the opponent's right triceps with your left hand and around the back of his neck with the right.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

This is the basic stance and grip to take when looking for a throw. When entering for a throw the grip will change accordingly. This is a very basic grip, a neutral grip that you share with your opponent.

The grips being described in this book are nothing more than basic and, depending upon how far you wish to take the art of grappling, grip work can go to really high levels. A good player always controls the grip in most grappling systems before he even thinks about attempting a throw. At high-level competition it is usually the better grip fighter that dominates and wins the day. Excellence in grip work also allows small players to completely dominate large players with lesser gripping ability. When I was training at Neil Adams' club I was getting battered every session purely because I was being out-gripped. Usually within minutes of fighting I'd be dominated and then thrown because my opponents would not only dominate grip, they also wouldn't let me get a grip at all. I can't tell you what a difference it made to my fighting when the grip concept finally fell into place. Even with international players I could hold my own because I could fight for grip. It may take time for it to come together, but when it does it'll all have been worth it.

So for now we should be content with basic grip. In the street encounter the problem rarely arises, you are very unlikely to be meeting any trained grapplers in a street attack – you hope. You very much have to work with what you are given in this uncompromising arena. Once you are a good gripper though, no arena will be a problem. Good grippers, especially judo players on the international set, are so good they throw people over with their grip alone. When my instructor, Wayne Lakin, took his second Dan he hardly had to execute a throw, he was so strong in the grip he was literally pulling his opponents off their feet. Another of my friends, 'Judo Jim', has been known to snap his opponents' fingers with his grip release techniques. But that's another book; this text is more about getting the basics right.

Once we have the basic stance and grip we use it to break the opponent's balance. On a street level most fighters have terrible balance, they tend to come to the fight with little more than raw aggression (which is often all they need to win a fight) and bad intention (which is often enough to scare the poo out of their opponents). A player facing an opponent of equal skill is very unlikely to throw him at all without breaking balance first.

You can break the opponent's balance with pulling or pushing actions or by attempting or feigning one throw to set him up for another.

Balance breaking does not vary from one system of grappling to another, so forgive me if you have heard any of this before; it does stand repeating. You break the opponent's balance by pushing or pulling him to the left rear, directly behind, to the right rear or directly to his right or left. Alternatively you can pull the opponent directly towards you, to your left or right rear or directly to the right or left. You can also pull him downwards.

Any one of these actions will force the opponent to move, hopefully out of stance and off balance, and when he does you can execute a throw.

I have always been an attacking fighter, but I do know that a lot of people prefer defensive fighting. They wait until the opponent makes his move before they attack, taking the opponent off balance as he tries to execute a throw.

Stiff Arming

Stiff armers tend to favour jacketed grappling (Judo, Sombo, etc.) but there can still be an element of it in wrestling.

This phenomenon usually occurs with people who try to use strength over technique (never a good idea). Less skilful players, or nervy, scared players, especially the type that you will meet in a street encounter, will literally hold you to the spot with their strength. I have been stiff-armed (sounds painful I know) more times than I care to remember. In the street it's not really a problem because you just whack them and their attention is automatically drawn away from the grip; in the dojo however, just 'whacking them' might get you the throw but it will definitely lose you the contest because the referee will have you off the mat before you can say 'belly to belly suplex.' Stiff armers do little more than hold on for dear life, they don't attack or defend, they just hold. Dealing with them requires good grip work and a good sense of flow, using their strength against them by going with the flow of energy. If it's a street encounter, kick them in the 'reproduction kit,' or strike them with any available technique, before the throw. In days of old (when men were bold and . . .) this was legitimate, they called it 'blow before throw.' A strike as a precursor to a throw was a natural way to break an opponent's balance – both physical and mental – to set him up for the big throw.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

In the street you often encounter fighters with no clothing of any substance to grab; Greco and freestyle come into their own in these situations where you would need to revert to the wrestling hooks and holds to secure a take-down. Of all the grappling styles that I have studied this is one of the very best for the street because it relies totally on bodily control over an opponent using natural hooks. It also allows you, if the situation is favourable, to take a person over very gently without hurting him, or paradoxically (again if it was absolutely necessary), you could slam him hard into the floor and do a lot of damage. I like the idea of being able to control people without hurting them. Greco lets you do that.

Grips

Here are a few of the grips used in Freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling.

Note: Never intertwine your fingers, when you try to pull them apart it is very easy to dislocate your fingers or knuckles.

ADRENAL MAP
The Disguises of Fear

Grab Finger Grip

Grab the four fingers of your left hand with the four fingers of your right hand. Lock them by closing your fists together firmly. Pull on all four fingers of both hands at the same time to ensure the lock.

Wrist Grip

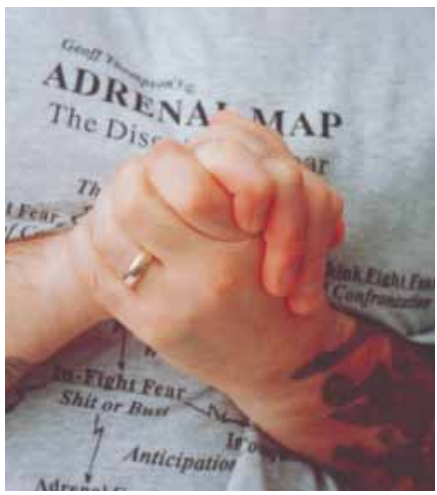
Grab your left wrist with your right hand (or vice versa) with your thumb and forefinger around your left wrist.

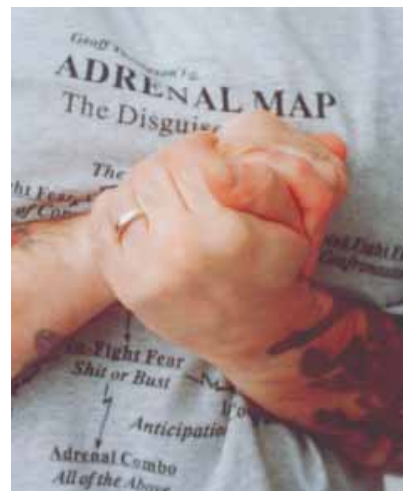
Grab Back of Hand and Wrist

Grab the blade side of your left wrist with your right hand. Your two smallest fingers should be around the wrist, the bigger fingers on the blade side of the hand. Your thumb should be on the same side as the fingers.

Palm to Palm Grip

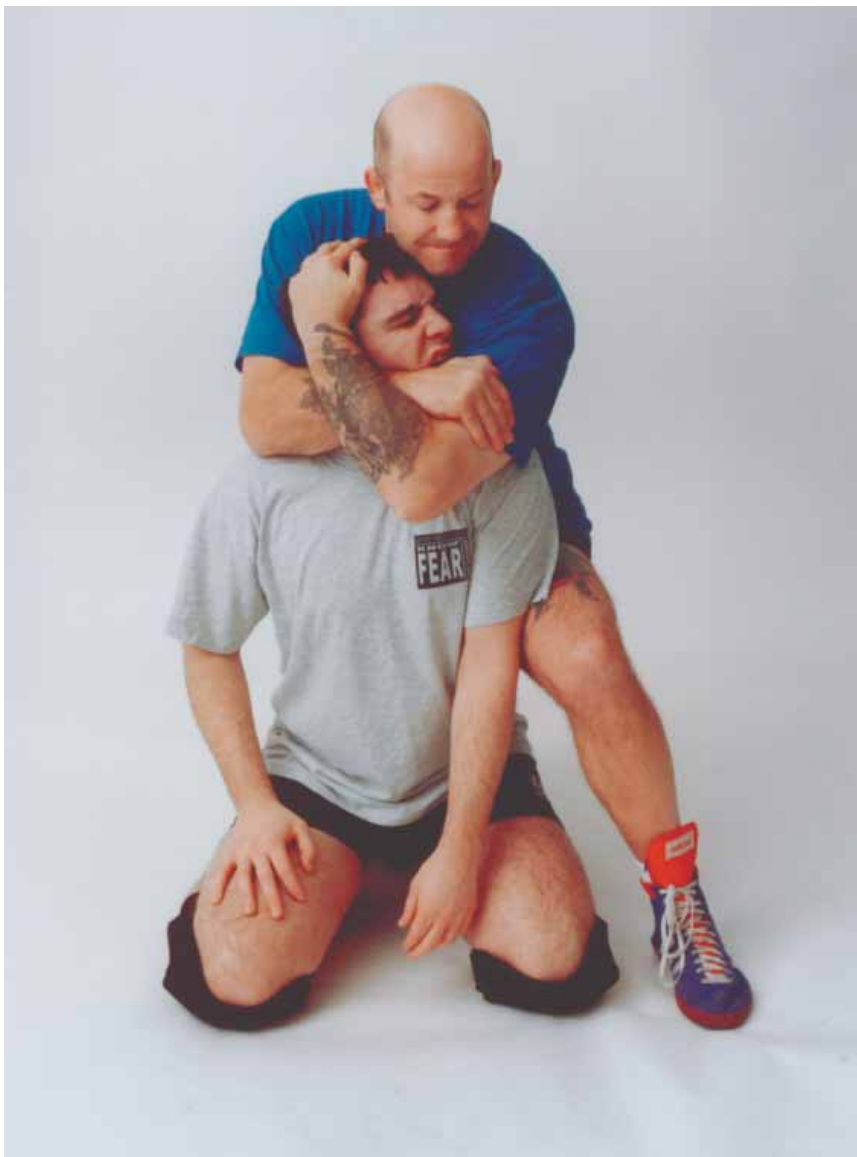
Place your left palm on your right palm and clasp both hands around each other. (Shown with thumb in & thumb out.)





Palm to Bicep Grip

Grab your right bicep with your left hand; bend the left arm to make the grip or lock strong. This lock is used especially for face or arm bars.



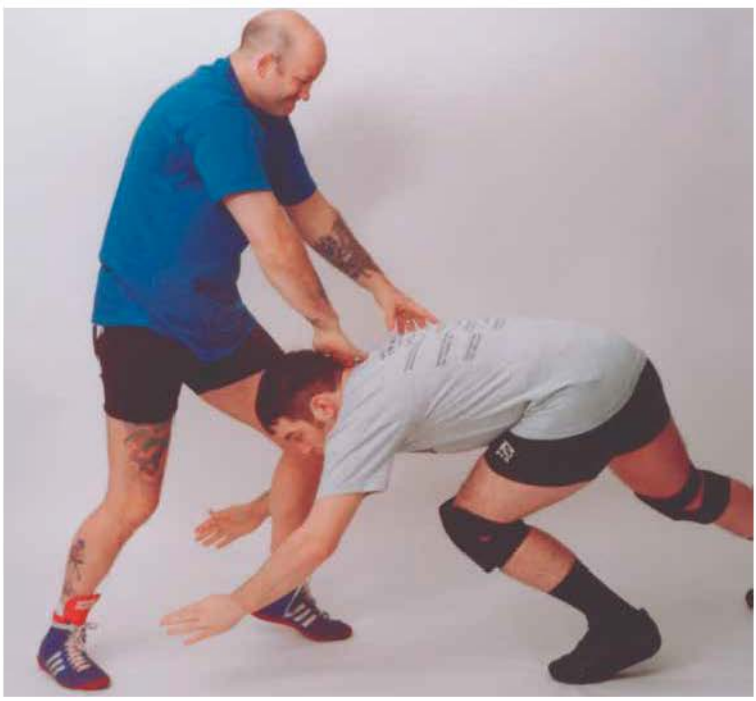
Put these grips into practise because they are the most important part of the take-down. No grip, no throw. To be honest the grip is the most exciting part of the fight to me, I love it. I know that from the outside it can all look a bit dull, it might look like nothing is happening when the players fight for grip, but when you know what you are looking at you'll love it. It's like a physical game of chess. And the power you feel once you understand and can use the grips. You get hold of people and they struggle to breathe let alone escape. It's a fantastic part of grappling that I urge you not to overlook.

Chapter Two
The Snatch

Of all the Greco throws this one is probably my favourite. It doesn't look pretty, it isn't a devastating fall but it is very simple and very functional. Outside it works like a charm. Personally I couldn't give a monkey's bum what the throw looks like as long as it is functional, as long as it's potent. My old friend Dave Turton always told me that it didn't matter what colour the cat was as long as it killed mice. Enough said.

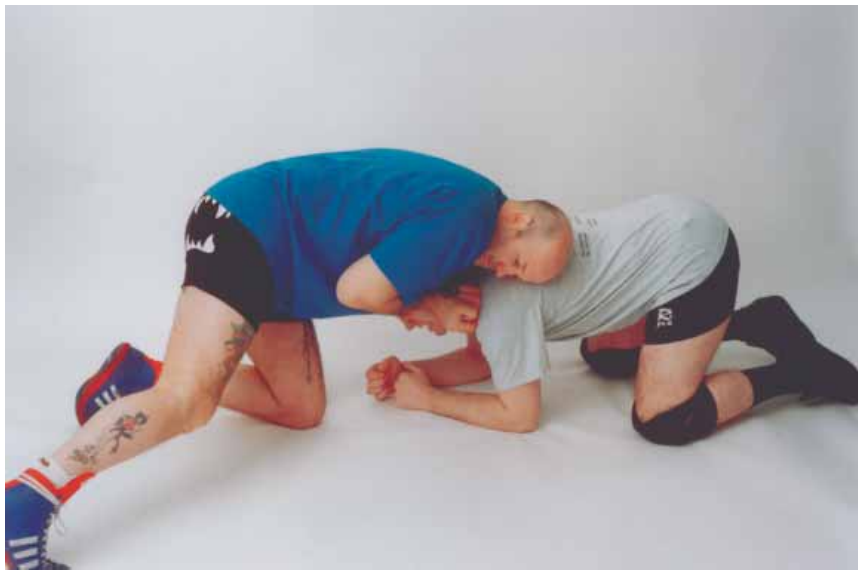
From the conventional grip, left lead wedge stance, snatch the opponent's head forward as though you are trying to smash his face into the floor (actually I suppose that is what you are trying to do) as you simultaneously lunge backwards with your right (or left) reverse leg. Drive his face to the floor. The shock of the attack will take him off balance and over on to his belly. From here you can finish however you wish.

Greco-Roman Wrestling



Alternatively you can use the snatch to capture the opponent's head in a guillotine by snatching him forward in the same way. Instead of trying to yank him over with the snatch, pull his head under your right or left armpit and wrap the same arm, under and around his neck so that you have him in a headlock or choke. From here, sprawl your legs backwards and drag the opponent on to his knees. Finish, again, however you wish.

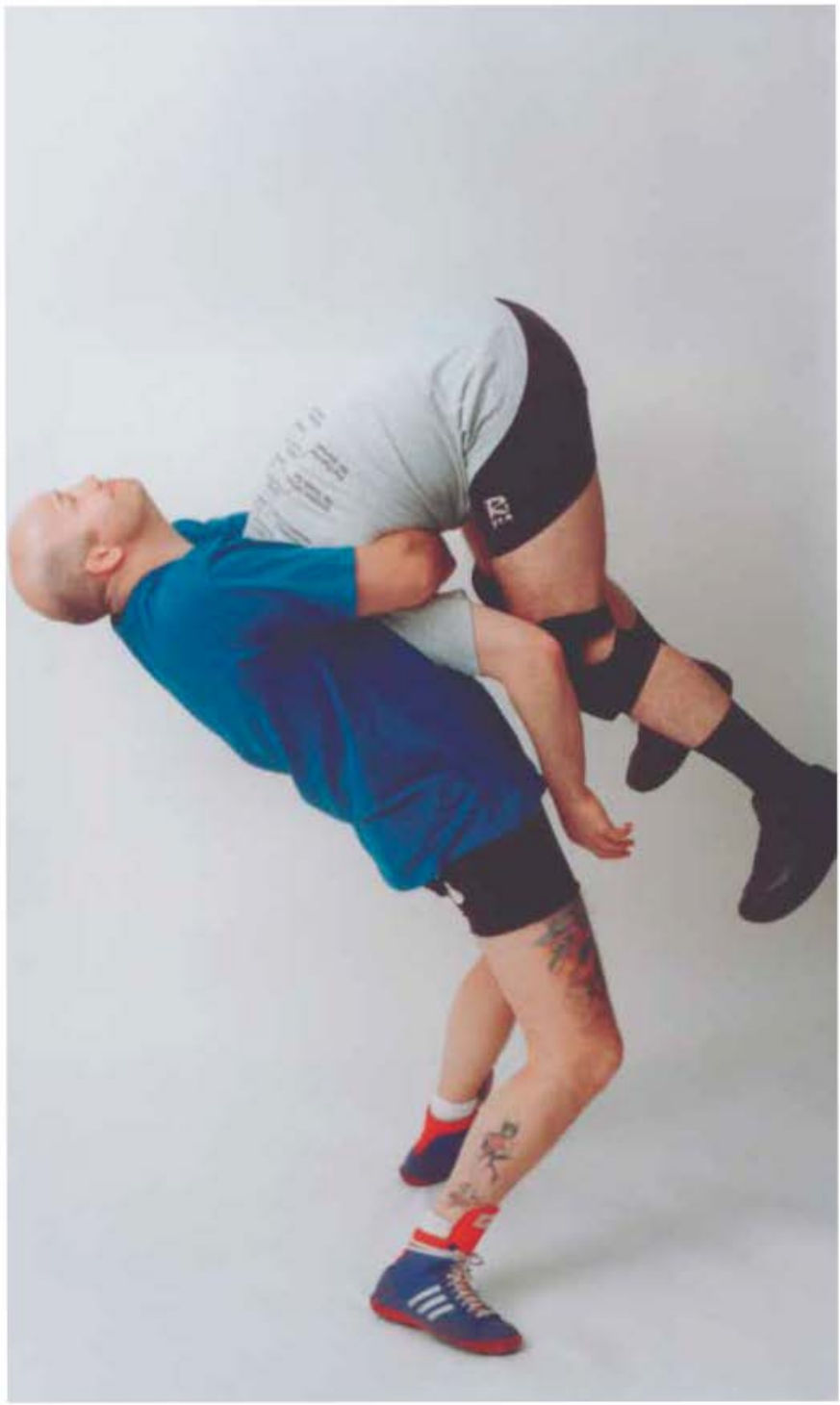
Greco-Roman Wrestling



Yet another alternative from the snatch is to suplex the opponent over your head. Snatch the opponent forward and catch his head in a lock, step in close so that both of your feet are level with, and outside the opponent's feet. Bend very deeply at the knees keeping your back as straight as possible. You should be right underneath his centre of gravity. Pick him up by the head and throw him over your head by straightening your legs and arching your back, crab-like.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

Another alternative from the snatch is the same suplex via the opponent's waist as opposed to his head. Snatch the opponent's head forward so that he falls into you. As he does so reach over his back and wrap your arms around his waist. Step into him so that both of your feet are level with and outside the opponent's feet. Bend very deeply at the knees keeping your back as straight as possible. You should be right underneath his centre of gravity. Pick him up and throw him over your head by straightening your legs and arching your back, crab-like.



Chapter Three
Belly to Belly Suplex

Of all the suplex throws I would say this has to be the most difficult. But, as with all the suplex throws, it does have an awesome effect on the opponent when you throw him clean over your head, especially in the street scenario.

Wrap your arms around the waist of the opponent and grip very tight at the small of his back (take any grip you can as long as it is very tight, your grip needs to be iron tight to keep him close enough to throw). Your bodies should be almost welded together. Any gaps at all and the throw will not happen. Drop your centre of gravity so that your legs are heavily bent and you are beneath his centre of gravity. Your feet should be at least parallel with his, even behind his. Depending upon where his feet are you can stand outside of them, inside of them or somewhere in between. Pick him up off the floor and throw him directly backwards and over your head by straightening your legs and arching your back, crab-like.

Belly to Belly Suplex

Greco-Roman Wrestling

At the end of the throw you have the option to turn just as the opponent is about to hit the deck (this would not then be a full suplex) or simply arch right into a crab position landing the opponent on his neck or head.

You can employ this throw by grabbing around the waist, or by grabbing around the opponent's arms or by entangling just one of his arms, as illustrated. As long as it allows your hands to meet and grip. As I said, the grip you take will vary according to where you take the grip and the girth of your opponent.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

Chapter Four
Belly to Side Suplex

In actuality all suplex type throws are very similar, it is only the entry and where you grip that changes. So, in effect, as long as you can get both arms tightly around the opponent and join them at the other side you can suplex them. The counter to a suplex, if you get caught, is to either drop forward to the floor, in which case the opponent is where you want him anyway, or to hook your foot or feet, as shown.

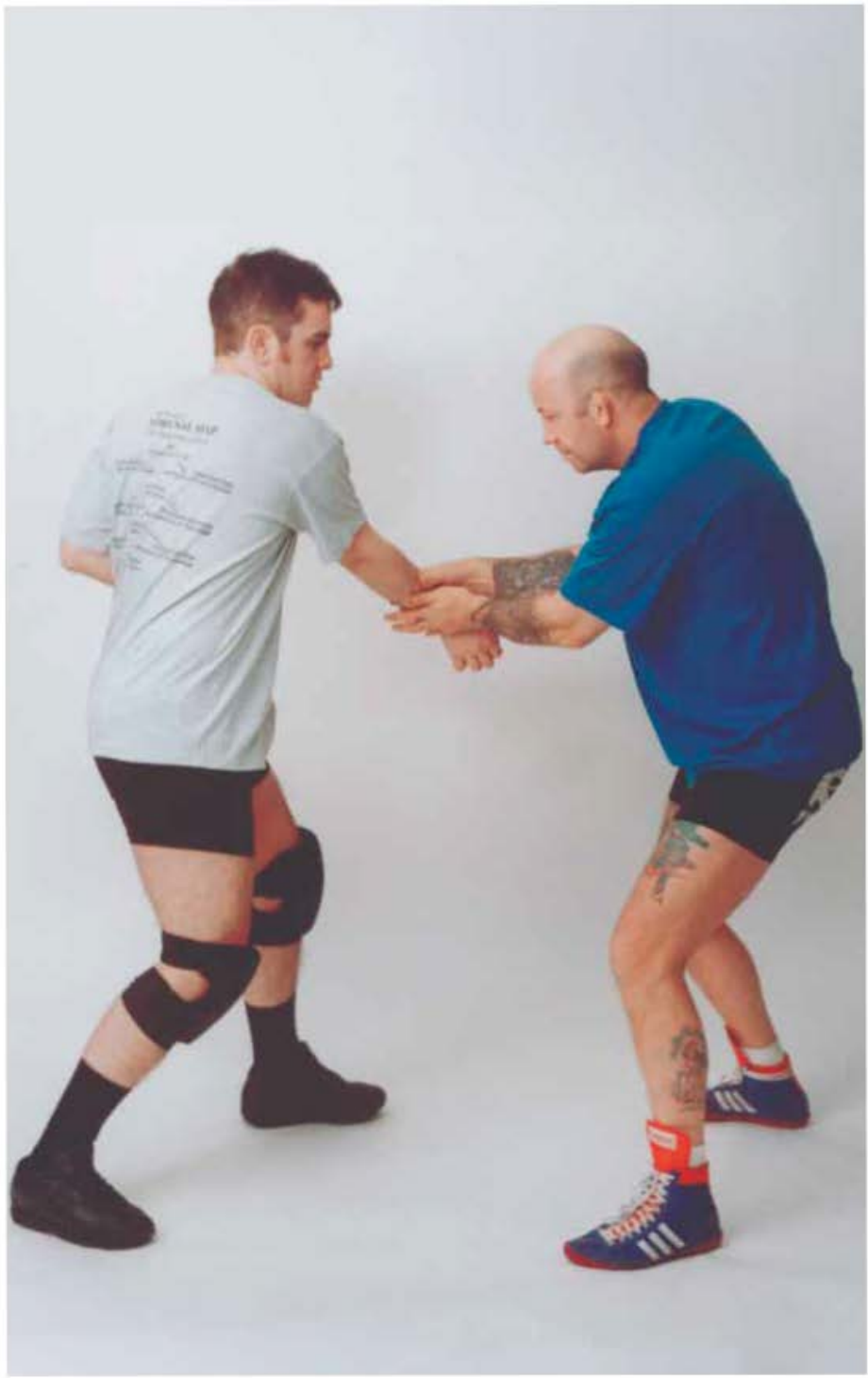
Hook your foot around the inside of the opponent's calves. If your opponent uses this defence you would counter by falling or pushing him forward so that you land on top of him, again getting him where you wanted him in the first place. With the belly to side suplex you can either take the throw simply because you have found yourself in the ideal position to do so or you can create a window, an entry, to set up the throw.

Let's have a look at how you would make the entry to take the throw.

As the opponent's right arm reaches to grip your left shoulder, hook around the opponent's wrist with the inside of your wrist and sweep it around and into his own side. You can if you wish use your right hand to grab and assist this motion, as illustrated. I always do. As you do so, step across the opponent's legs with your right leg and wrap your arms around his waist, joining at the small of his back while simultaneously trapping his right arm in the process. In the same smooth action, step around the back of his legs in a circular motion with your left leg and drop deep so that you

are below his centre of gravity, pick the opponent up and suplex him over your head. At the end of the throw, as the opponent is hitting the floor, you have the choice of turning out of the arch or going into a crab position.

Greco-Roman Wrestling



Belly to Side Suplex

This whole throw should be done smoothly and without hesitation, it should be one flowing action so that momentum aids you in the throw and the opponent has no time to block it.

The hand action at the beginning of the throw is complicated to start with, but gets easier with practise. My own Greco coach, Kris Wheelan from the USA, had us work on the entry to the throw independently of the throw itself. As with all throw and groundwork techniques it is the catch that is vitally important. Without that you haven't got a throw. So isolate the hand action and practise it thousands of time so that it comes as a natural reaction to any kind of grab. Important also is the lift itself. Try not to bend your back when executing the throw but bend at the knees and keep the back as straight as possible. The power in the suplex throw is in having a strong grip around the opponent's waist and driving from the legs. Once you have the throwing action off you will start finding the suplex from lots of different positions. Even when people make their entry for a throw you will find yourself picking them up and throwing them over your head.

Chapter Five
Belly to Back Suplex

This is the most common of all the suplex throws and the one most demonstrated in wrestling (show and shoot) matches. I also find that it is the easiest of all the suplex throws because you are actually behind the opponent and therefore he cannot defend very much, other than to fall forward on to his knee, which is OK because he is on the floor where you wanted him in the first place.

Again it is the entry that is important here but of all the suplex throws the entry to this one is the easiest and the most natural. Very often when fighting, especially in the street scenario, you find yourself behind the opponent (though you won't quite know how you got there) but with no knowledge of what to do with the opportunity. In this case we will take the throw from an entry as opposed to just being behind the opponent.

You can do this in one of two ways: either duck under the arm of the opponent as he makes to grip you, then slide

behind him, or simply duck under his grip once it has been taken and then slide behind him.

As the opponent tries to take a high grip on you, prop his right arm up with your left hand, as shown, and duck underneath it, keeping your head very close to his body.

Simultaneously step behind him with your left leg and allow your right arm to wrap around his waist. Once behind him turn so that your belly is to his back and join your right and left hands at his lower abdomen and squeeze very tight. Drop your weight at the knees so that you are below his centre of gravity and pick the opponent up. Suplex him over your head in the usual manner, arching your back as you throw.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

Greco-Roman Wrestling

Again I must stipulate that the whole sequence of these throws must be smooth with no (or few) stopping and starting actions. Any stutter in the smoothness of the entry could allow the opponent an exit. Smoothness will only come from practising many times.

Chapter Six
The High Double Leg Take-down

This is a very similar throw to the low double leg take-down of freestyle wrestling. Of course in the Greco they do not allow any attacks to the leg area of the body (not that this would not affect you in the street scenario where the only rule is 'there are no rules'), so they take the throw higher up on the hips of the opponent.

Wrap your arms around the waist of the opponent. Make your grip (your grip depends upon how thick the opponent's waist is) at the small of his back, just above his hips. Simultaneously drop all your weight on to your right (or left) leg and drive your right (or left) knee to the floor between and just past the inside of his legs. Your left knee bends to the right side of his body and is used like a starting block to drive the opponent on to his back. Your head goes tight into his right side, just under his armpit. This whole action has to come together as one piece and you should explode into the opponent so that he has no time to defend.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

An alternative to this technique is to attack exactly the same way only with both knees between the opponent's legs as opposed to one inside and one out. This can be quite effective if you have been pulled to your knees anyway, just wrap your arms around his waist and drive him over.

Wrap your arms around the waist of the opponent, on the inside of his arms (this would also work on the outside of his arms if you could trap them by his sides). Make your grip at the small of his back, just above his hips.

With both of these attacks there is the obvious danger of getting your head caught in a guillotine attack or a strong headlock. To avert this keep your head as tight into your opponent's body as it will go and keep you left shoulder high so that there are no gaps for him to take the headlock.

Chapter Seven
The Twisting Body-lock Take-down

As a defence to the last throw the opponent may drop his body weight to disable your entry to the throw. If he does defend in this way your grip will naturally slide higher up his body so that your arms are under his armpits. In this instance you can take the opponent over with the twisting body lock. This doesn't necessarily have to come as a counter to the last defence. It is a legitimate throw in its own right and can be taken at any time as long as your arms are in the right position. As your arms come under the opponent's armpit step back with your left leg and thrust upward with your right arm, so that the opponent's left arm is forced up and over. By making small steps, keep moving in a circle (clockwise or anticlockwise depending upon which armpit you are under) and thrust the opponent's arm over so that he is forced off balance and on to his back.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

Greco-Roman Wrestling

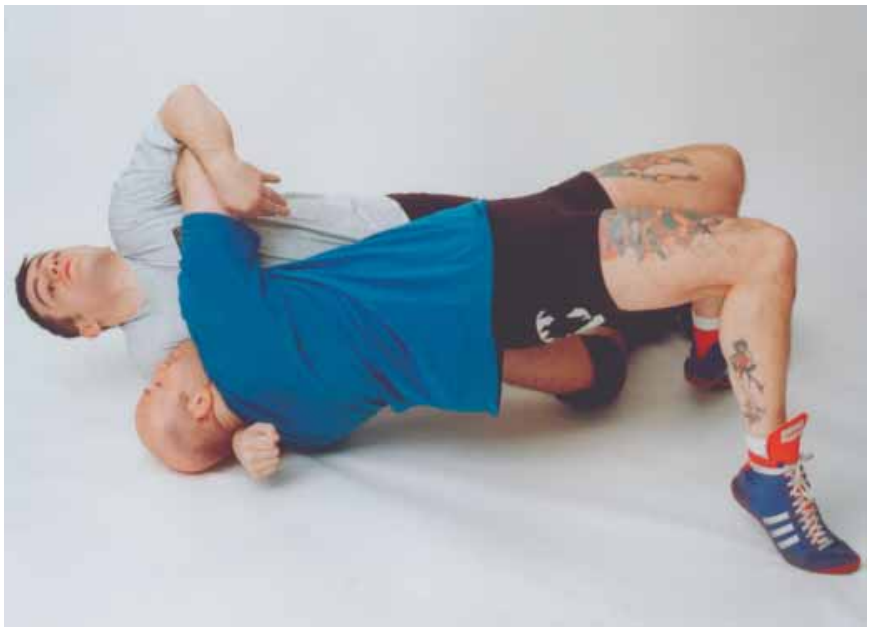
Exactly the same throw can be taken effectively from the single under arm grip. Trap the opponent's right (or left) arm on the outside as you thrust his other arm, from under the armpit, up and over.

Chapter Eight
The Double Under-hook Lateral Drop

This is very similar to the last few throws, working from the double under-hook, only this time the throw is almost a suplex.

Pull your opponent towards you and back-peddle so that he has to follow. When he is in a position so that he has one foot forward and one foot back, plant both of your feet close together so that the heels of your feet become the throwing base. As you pull him to you, swing him in the direction of the trailing foot and drop laterally so that he is falling on to you. As this occurs thrust your right thigh against his right thigh and twist in mid air so that he is turned on to his back and you on to your front, as illustrated.

Greco-Roman Wrestling



This is by no means an easy throw and it is very important that you practise initially on a crash mat so that neither you nor your opponent is hurt. It takes a lot of confidence to execute a throw like this and caution in practise is always recommended.

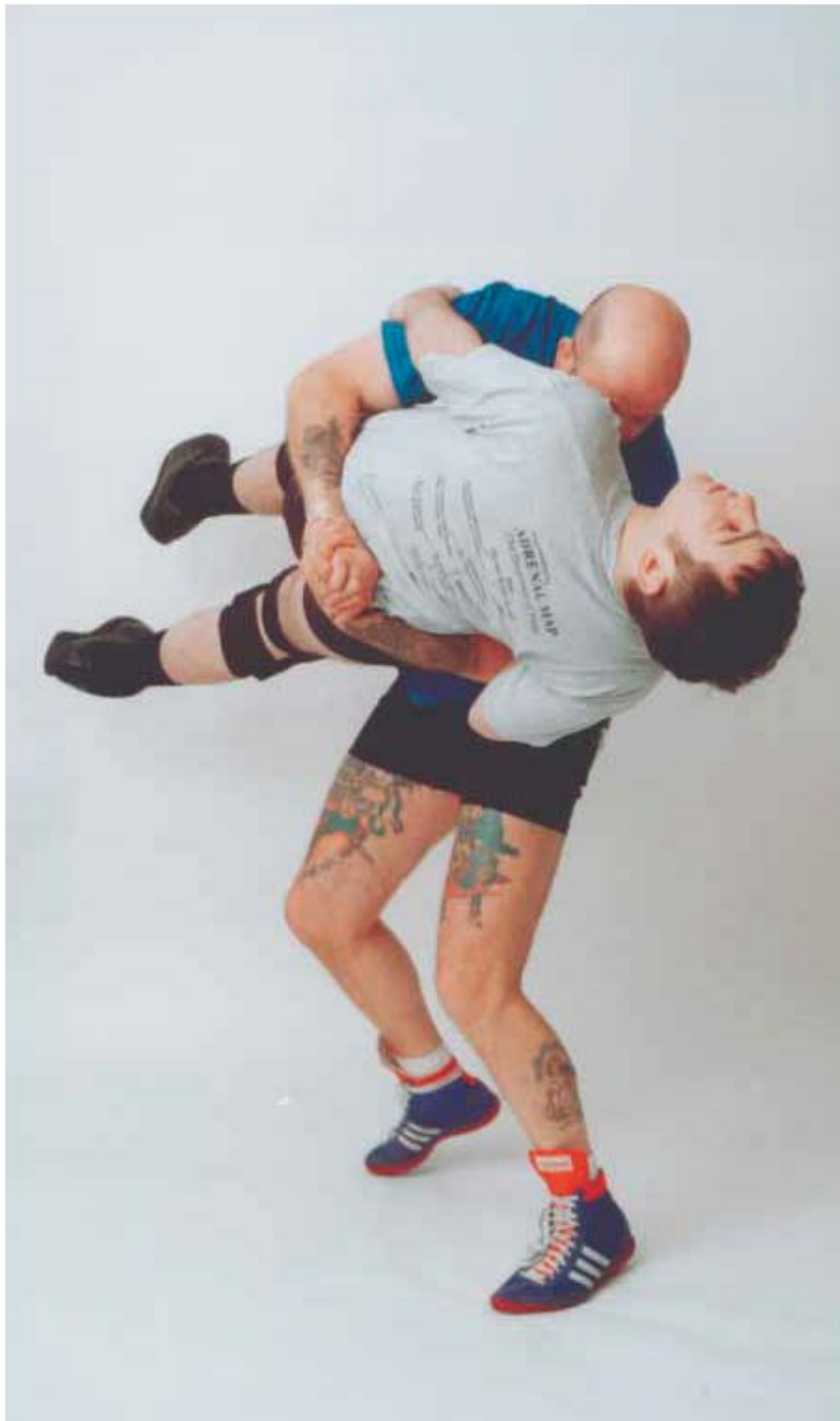
Chapter Nine
The High Double Leg Hip Swing

This is the kind of technique that the cage fighters, or shoot fighter in the UFC (Ultimate Fight Competition) like to employ because it doesn't expend a lot of energy and it allows you to keep control of the opponent once he has been taken to the floor. In a self-defence situation it would be more important to slam your assailant to the floor very hard so that you can make good an escape.

The entry to this throw is the same as that of the high double leg.

Wrap your arms tightly around the opponent's waist, so that you are belly to belly. Tuck your head tightly into his right chest or shoulder area. Place your right (or left) leg forward and between his legs. Drop your body at the knees and pick the opponent off the floor. When he is up hold him tightly to your body as you turn slowly. Move his hips so that he twists in the air and at this point drop him on to his back.

Greco-Roman Wrestling



Greco-Roman Wrestling

Again be very careful of getting your head caught in the opponent's headlock. He will try to grab your head in defence to the throw. Keep it very tight to his body so that there are no gaps for him to move, let alone take the headlock.

Chapter Ten
Off-Balancing From the Body-lock

From the body-lock position, arms wrapped tightly around the opponent's waist, join them at the small of his back. Drive your left leg between and behind his legs whilst forcing your weight to your left. As the opponent adjusts to keep his balance, drive forward and down taking his back to the floor.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

Again close body contact at all times is necessary for the throw to find effect; any gaps and you'll be unsuccessful.

Chapter Eleven
Head and Arm Take-down

This is another throw that takes control of the head to gain control of the body. As a rule of thumb this is very effective. Once you control the head of the opponent you also control the body. It is very hard for the body to resist once the head has been forced in a certain direction.

With the head and arm take-down you take charge of the opponent's head by forcing your right arm over his left shoulder and joining it with your left hand underneath his right armpit. Clasp the hands tightly together and step forward, quickly, to the outside of his right leg whilst forcing his head backwards with your right bicep. As his weight tumbles backwards, slam his back to the floor and follow through to a pin.

Greco-Roman Wrestling

Head and Arm Take-down

From this same grip you can also take the conventional hip throw (cross buttock) by simply turning in so that your bottom is just past lower abdomen. Lift him over your hip and slam him into the floor.

Head and Arm Take-down

Conclusion

As I have stated in the other volumes of the throws and take-downs series this is not a comprehensive text on Greco-Roman wrestling. It is not intended to be. I have only learned the art to a level one instructor standard. What I have always managed to do with my training is integrate the solid basics of many styles into one so that it suits me. I would recommend that everyone do this, so that in the end each of us has our own unique style. Don't allow yourself to become a clone, there is nothing worse. What works for one person may be entirely unsuitable for another so mould the technique and make it your own.

What you see here are the techniques I favour most from the Greco system, my best techniques if you like. Certainly they are the ones that I personally find most effective. I hope, if nothing else, that they encourage you to seek out higher instruction in this ancient and highly effective art.

As with anything worth its salt none of the techniques in this book are just going to come to you. You must drill them until they become a part of you, you have to drill them until you

hate them to pieces and you can execute them without having to think. Once you can do this, the technique will be yours. What I like most about the Greco system in particular is the body building qualities. A year of practising with this system will make you very strong, not only in a physical sense but also mentally. Mental toughness is one of the great attributes of most grappling systems.

I hope that this has worked for you and that it will help you to develop such a high level of confidence that you will eventually be able to walk away from violent confrontation and only use your skills should you be forced into a corner. As I have already stated, this book will not make you an expert; I could give you a book on Monet (the painter) but it wouldn't make you a great impressionist. Rather it is the first step in mastering one of the forgotten arts, the art of Greco-Roman wrestling.

Thank you very much for reading and may God bless you.
Geoff Thompson 2001

THE THROWS & TAKE-DOWNS OF SOMBO

RUSSIAN WRESTLING

GEOFF THOMPSON

SUMMERSDALE

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Important note

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

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Geoff Thompson has written over 20 books and is known worldwide for his bestselling autobiography, *Watch My Back*, about his nine years working as a nightclub doorman. He currently has a quarter of a million books in print. He holds the rank of 6th Dan black belt in Japanese karate, 1st Dan in judo and is also qualified to senior instructor level in various other forms of wrestling and martial arts. He has several scripts for stage and screen in development with Destiny Films.

He has published articles for *GQ* magazine, and has also been featured in *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Arena*, *Front* and *Loaded* magazines, and has appeared many times on mainstream television.
Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine.

Geoff qualified as a sombo instructor after training privately under the Master of Sport, former Moscow sombo club champion Vadim Kolganov. He is a recognised sombo instructor with Mathew Clempner's FORMA (Federation of Russian Martial Arts).

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The History of Sombo by Vadim Kolganov

Whilst there are many systems around under the guise of Russian wrestling, sombo is the authentic Russian art in its pure form and not a derivative.

Since ancient times man has developed different types of physical exercise which were used in combat training. The most popular exercise was grappling or wrestling in one form or another. In the folklore of most nations there was an ideal hero who had extraordinary, even magical, physical and spiritual powers which enabled him to fight evil forces. One of the main characteristics of these heroes – Gilgamesh in Babylon, Ozikis in Egypt, Hercules in Greece, great U in China, Igreid in Germany, Ruslem in Tibet, Illya Murometz in Russia – was that they were all unbeatable masters of wrestling.

Sombo Russian Wrestling

In Egypt physical exercise, especially wrestling, has existed for a long time; evidence of this has been found in the pyramids of the Pharaohs and nobles. In one pyramid about 400 pictures were discovered that depicted different wrestling techniques, recognisable even today.

The ancient Greeks also played an important role in the history of physical culture. They developed a strong system of physical training as early as the ninth century BC that is still useful today. In schools (*Palestas*) specialist teachers developed programmes to train young athletes in wrestling, sprinting, long jump, juggling and discus throwing. This formed the basis of what later became known as the Pentathlon.

The first rules of competition for wrestling were laid down by Tazaem, the founder of Athens.

The Olympic games were begun in Ancient Greece (776 BC) and wrestling was in the first programme both as an independent sport and also as a component part of

pancratium – a combination of fist fighting and wrestling (circa 648 BC).

Rome also played an essential part in the development of wrestling. The Romans didn't follow the Greek philosophy of all-round athletic development; they leaned more toward military type training. During the upsurge of feudalism in Europe (eleventh to fifteenth century AD) a system of training for knights was also developed that included fighting contests with and without weapons.

Talhoffer's fifteenth-century book of wrestling was one of the first texts on the subjects and the illustrations in the book show self-defence techniques that are very similar to modern ju-jitsu.

Medieval manuscripts and calendars show that wrestling featured very heavily in celebrations of the day such as fairs and weddings. During this time most countries were developing systems of physical exercise which clearly

expressed their national character, but in spite of the different principles and aims of these countries, they all included fencing, running, swimming and wrestling.

Wrestling in Russia was developed from techniques taken from many countries. Strength, adroitness and endurance were long-admired fighting characteristics and thus festive gatherings always ended in a wrestling contest. Wrestling was often seen as a way of solving arguments in Russian towns: there was even a special place built to stage these matches. Sombo wrestling was born in Russia as a result of exhaustive research by Soviet coaches and sportsmen.

In sport-sombo, all national and international wrestling techniques can be used and combat-sombo also incorporates the best elements from different systems of self-defence. Because of this rich and varied technical arsenal, sombo is often referred to as 'the invisible weapon' – the weapon that is always with you.

The History of Sombo by Vadim Kolganov

Sombo wrestling is one of the youngest sports in Russia but it would be difficult to find another sport with a more interesting or complex history. Sombo came not from one but from several different and diverse sources. Even the name itself was repeatedly changed as the art developed: 'self-defence', 'samoz', 'system sam', 'freestyle wrestling', 'freestyle sombo wrestling', and then finally 'sombo wrestling'. There are no definite dates for the birth of this great art. Some believe it began in November 1938, the year it was officially recognised as a cultivated sport within the Soviet Union. Others say that sombo wrestling contests were taking place earlier in the 1930s. Another school of thought believes that a prototype of sombo was taking shape in the early 1920s. Traditionally it is considered that sombo was invented by three outstanding men; V. A. Spiridonov, B. C. Oshepkov and A. A. Xarlampiev. Each of these Masters of Sport played a pivotal role in the conception of sombo.

Sombo wrestling is all about the will to win, fitness, courage, strength, quickness and adroitness. Training in sombo helps

sportsmen to defend themselves without resorting to weaponry. Thus, it is an excellent sport or art for anybody in the field of self-defence and one with which I am proud to be affiliated.

I am sure that this book by my student Geoff Thompson will help you to these ends.

Vadim Kolganov – Russian coach of sombo wrestling and Master of Sport at the Central Academy of Sport, Moscow 1986 – 1991

Introduction

Before I start, I would like to explain that this is not meant to be a comprehensive book on sombo wrestling throws and take-downs, neither am I aiming to represent anyone else other than myself. The techniques in this book are my own personal favourites from the sombo system – nothing more, nothing less.

There has been a lot said of late about the art of grappling, especially the ground fighting aspects of the art. The grappling arts seem to be enjoying a well-earned and long-awaited revival.

Grappling was in vogue in the early part of this century, or the Golden Age of Wrestling as it was known, but its popularity died off just before – and partly due to – the First World War. After the war it enjoyed something of a revival but more in the form of show wrestling.

Sombo Russian Wrestling

More recently grappling seems to have been hidden within the shadow of contemporary combat; this is probably due to its candid demeanour. Its devastating potency is cloaked by a dishevelled front; people were – and still are – naturally drawn towards the superfluously spectacular kicking arts that have been the popular flavour for quite some time now.

However, the world of combat has at last evolved and many of the more spectacular arts have failed the acid test of time, not to mention the pressures of reality. The 'prettier' systems that originally had thousands flocking to dojos around the world have fallen at the obstacle of practicality proving to be less effective than their PR would suggest. The fundamental movements of the grappling arts, so often ignored due to the 'ugly duckling' syndrome, have risen to the surface and the swan of real combat has blossomed.

A lot of what happens in floor fighting (unless you are an exceptional player) is wholly determined by how you got there in the first place. If you are thrown to the floor and end

in a bad position you may never escape from there, or your opponent may be in a position to stand back up and kick pieces off you while you are on your back. In the controlled arena we tend to practise ground fighting from a neutral position where both fighters have an equal start. In a real situation there is no such luxury and you very much have to make the best of what you are given – unless of course you're the one who controls the take-down – which is what this book is all about.

The question that I'm most often asked in relation to ground fighting is, 'How do you get to that position from vertical fighting?'

Hopefully in this series of books on throws and take-downs I will be able to answer that question sensibly, if not comprehensively.

In this volume we will be looking at the throws and take-downs of sombo. Having studied this system with an authentic

Sombo Russian Wrestling

Russian Master of Sport, former Moscow club champion Vadim Kolganov, I can vouch for the potency and dynamism of this young and, as yet, little heard of art.

As with ground fighting don't make the throws and take-downs the be all and end all of your fighting arsenal, many opponents in a live scenario will not allow you to throw them cleanly, they will grip you as though their very lives depend upon it and drag you to the floor with them, if you don't know how to fight on the floor then you might be in trouble.

Use this book in combination with a good class (or partner); there is nothing like a real opponent to perfect the physical technique, I'd go as far as to say that it cannot be learned properly by book alone. Learn the fundamentals of the technique, and then put it under the pressure of a non-compliant partner. Once you can successfully use the technique against someone that doesn't want to be thrown, then you know you have the technique.

Compliance in training kills; it's only of use when first learning the fundamentals of a technique, once learned an opponent should offer 100 per cent resistance and also try to throw you. Taking the randori (free-fighting or sparring) out of a system is effectively taking the teeth out of it.

Best of luck to you with the practise and thank you for taking the time to read this book.

Chapter One
Balance, Stance, Grip

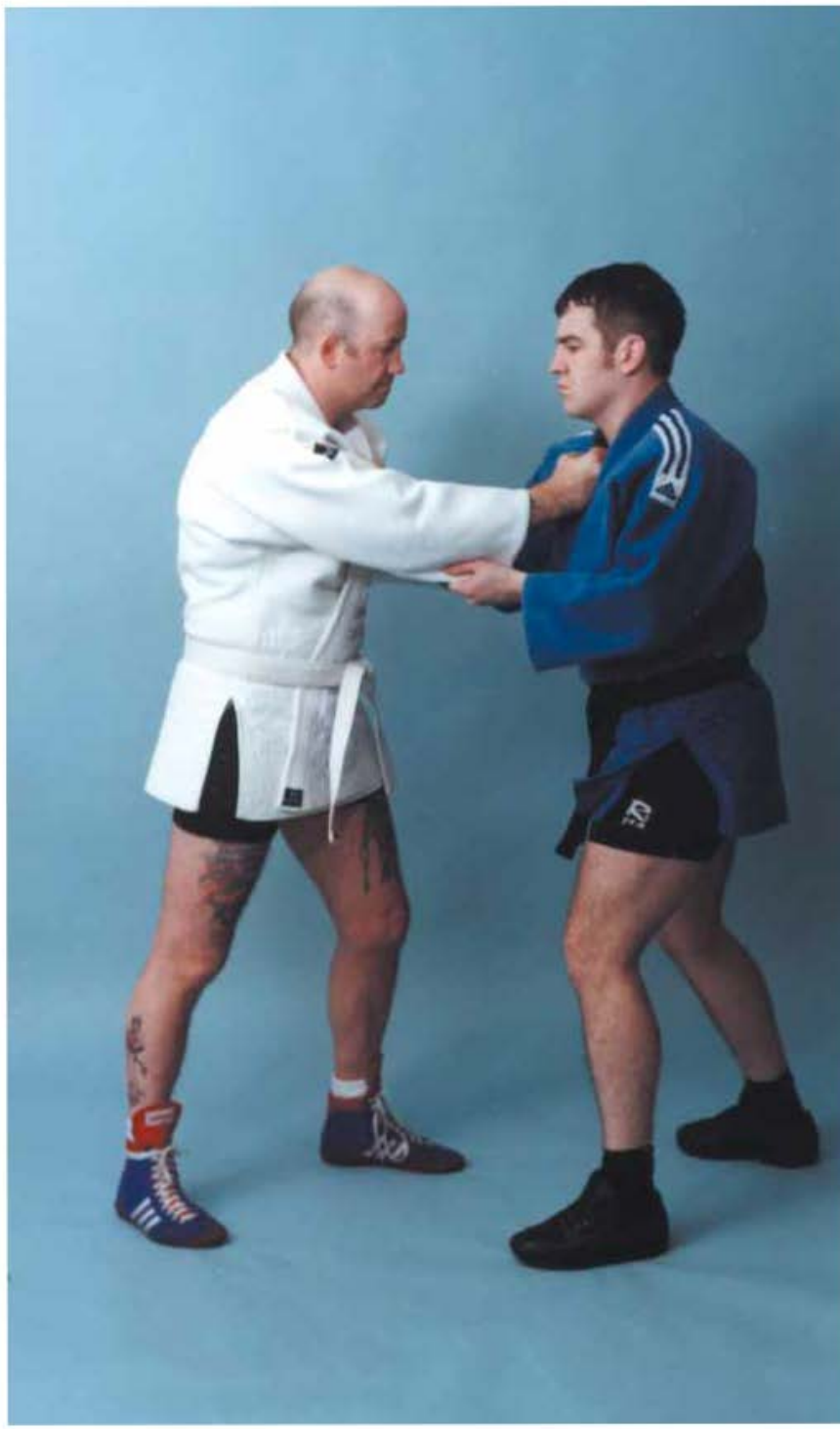
The fundamentals of balance are pretty much the same with all the grappling arts, so if you have read the other books in this series, forgive me for repeating myself.

Lets start at the beginning (it's a very good place to start). Knowing all the throws in the world won't help if you haven't got the balance and stance right. It is hard to throw an opponent and easy to be thrown when the balance is off. To be honest, balance is best developed when actually fighting on the mat with another player. What I'd like to give you here are the basics so that you can practise it correctly from the very beginning. I know when I first started in the grappling arts I made the mistake of practising without supervision and ended up being very good at doing techniques the wrong way. Getting the basics right is essential. So take your time with it and try not to rush ahead. Like any job worth doing, preparation is all. Hopefully what this book will do is act as

an appetiser for you to actually start a sombo class or, like me, perhaps take private lessons from an expert. Mathew Clempner runs an excellent class for Russian martial arts and I highly recommend him. His advert is at the back of this book.

We will start by working from a left lead stance; this can be changed if you prefer to lead with your right side, just reverse the instructions as I lay them out. Presuming that you are working from a left lead stance you should stand in a small 45-degree stance.

Sombo Russian Wrestling



Bend slightly at the knees and relax. The 45-degree is where you find your balance to throw and to prevent yourself from being thrown. Try to maintain this stance at all times. The only time you should change is when you enter to take a throw. Whether the throw is successful or not you should immediately revert back to the stance, if you do successfully throw the opponent you can follow him down to ground fighting or stay vertical and finish him from there (or run away if the altercation is in the street).

Grip the opponent's right lapel (or shirt, coat, neck, hair) with your left hand and his left sleeve or wrist or, in the case of wrestling, perhaps around the back of the triceps (upper arm) with your right. This is the basic stance and grip to take when looking for a throw. In the street you might not be able to choose your grip, in this case you may have to make do with what is given. It matters not because once the throws have been practised you should be able to take an opponent over from any grip and from any position. For now we will work with the fundamentals. Later you can look at more

advanced methodologies. The grips being described in this book are nothing more than basic but, depending upon how serious you are about the practice of sombo, a whole plethora of different grips can be developed. At high-level competitions it is usually the better grip fighter that dominates and wins the fight. For now, basic grips are fine; you are unlikely to be meeting any trained grapplers in a street attack.

Once you have the basic stance and grip you can use it to break the opponent's balance. On a mat you will be working with players who generally trained well in defending their balance and it becomes a game of breaking balance as a precursor to the throw. In fact with a player of equal skill you are very unlikely to throw them at all without breaking balance first.

You can break the opponent's balance in a number of ways; with pulling or pushing actions, or by attempting or feigning one throw to leave him open and vulnerable for another. You break the opponent's balance by pushing or pulling him

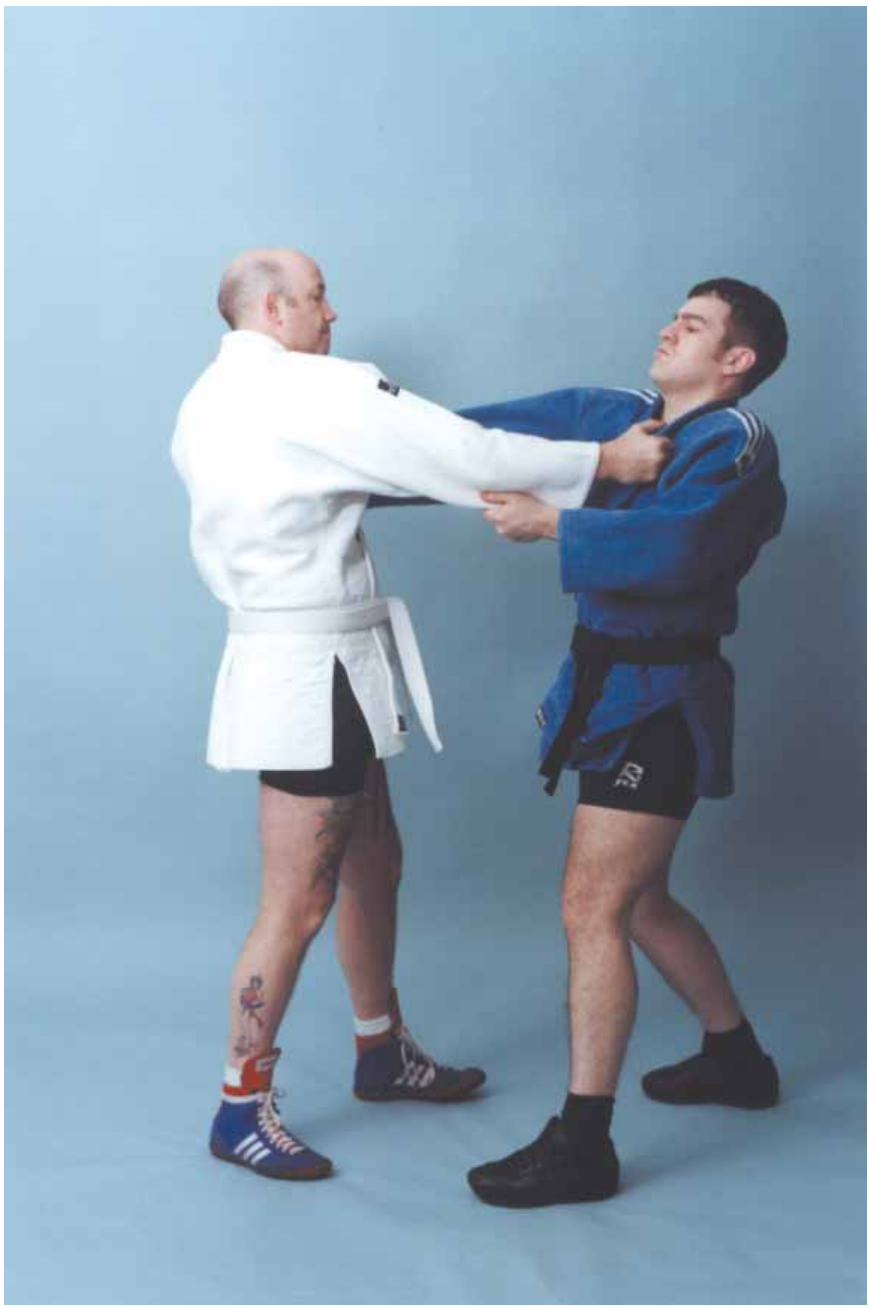
to the left rear, directly behind, to the right rear or directly to his right or left. Alternatively you can pull the opponent directly towards you, to your left or right rear or directly to the right or left. You can also pull him downward.

Any one of these actions will force the opponent to move, hopefully out of stance and off balance, and when he does you can execute a throw.

The other time to take an opponent off balance and take the throw is when he makes an attack (a throw or punch) and you take advantage of his stance change to take him over. All throwing actions rely heavily on feeling their energy and using it. This is something that has to be felt and cannot be properly related via the pages of a book.

Stiff Arming

This is a problem in most forms of grappling.



It usually occurs with less skilful opponents, especially the type that you will meet in a street encounter, who literally hold you to the spot with their strength, normally out of sheer terror. They don't attack or defend, they just hold on for dear life and once they grip it can be very difficult to get them off. I had a chap grip me with a stiff arm outside a Coventry nightclub; he held so tightly that even when I butted him unconscious and he fell to the floor, he was still holding on to my shirt and pulled it right off my back. Dealing with stiff armers requires good grip work and a good sense of flow; use their strength against them by going with the flow of energy. If it's a street encounter, kick them in the bollocks or butt them in the face before you attempt a throw, in fact, just strike them with any available technique first. It goes without saying that in most sport-grappling this would be an illegal move (I should know, I have tried more than once), so don't do it. Well, you can if you want to but don't say that I said you could! The blow before the throw will break the balance of even the strongest stiff armer and thus create a window of opportunity for you to bang in the throw.

Sombo Russian Wrestling

If you encounter a fighter with no substantial clothing to grab then the throwing technique has to change slightly. This has happened to me many times when facing people with thin T-shirts or even people who pull their tops off as part of their ritualistic posturing. It can be murderous trying to get a grip on a slippery torso (but enough about my sex life). In these circumstances you need to revert to the wrestling-type throws and use the opponent's limbs, as opposed to the apparel, to throw. From my experience of working with several systems of grappling, the wrestling take-downs are the favourites here because they don't rely on clothing to make a throw happen. Some of the Greco (Greco-Roman wrestling) snatches and freestyle leg take-downs come into their own in this scenario.

Having said that, give me a guy in heavy tweed and I'll make any throw happen. Again, this is not to say that you can't use judo or sombo if the opponent hasn't got a jacket on; you can, you may just have to adjust the technique slightly.

It is important that you have a good pull around with an opponent (preferably lots of different opponents) to get used to balance, grip and entries for the throws: the more times you are on the mat (but not on your back) the better.

Chapter Two
Double Leg Pick-up

The double leg pick-up is a lovely take-down and is usually taken from outside gripping range – that is, you take the throw before you take a grip on the opponent. Very often the attacker will employ this take-down at the same time his opponent strikes to take a grip on him, using the element of surprise as an entry. It can also be used if you have fallen, or been knocked to the floor and are on your knees in front an opponent.

It has been called the 'rugger' style attack because it resembles the type of tackle that a rugby player would use. It is a very instinctive throw and when used properly it can be devastating. The sombo players like this particular throw because it leaves the thrower still holding the opponent's legs, ideal for finishing with one of the many leg locks that the Russian players love to employ.

We will work the attack from just outside of gripping range. Lunge forward under the opponent's arms and grab around the back of his legs. Your head should go to the opponent's right side. Bend deeply at the knees and pick the opponent off the floor. Keep your back as straight as you can; the strength of the pick-up should come from your legs. Slam his back or head into the floor.

Be careful when using this technique that you don't get your head caught in the guillotine choke on the way in.

From here you have the choice to take the play to the floor, leg lock from where you are, or let go and finish with your feet.

Sombo Russian Wrestling

Double Leg Pick-up

Sombo Russian Wrestling

If you find yourself already on your knees on the floor and in front of an opponent (this generally happens if you get caught off guard and have been struck by an opponent), wrap your arms around the backs of his legs and tuck your head into the side of his thigh, drive forward with your legs and take the opponent to the floor.

Double Leg Pick-up

Sombo Russian Wrestling

A word of warning here: because this take-down is taken from outside of gripping range it might imply that I think you should use this instead of the more immediate punching range. For the record I believe that no throw should be taken when the option of punching is still open to you. The punching range is the main artillery range for close combat. Throws and take-downs, in my opinion, should only be used as support. There are exceptions but the general rule of thumb is never go to the grappling range unless you absolutely have to.

Chapter Three
Single Leg to Double Leg Take-down

The single leg to double leg take-down is very similar to the double leg take-down, only this time we are working from a grip.

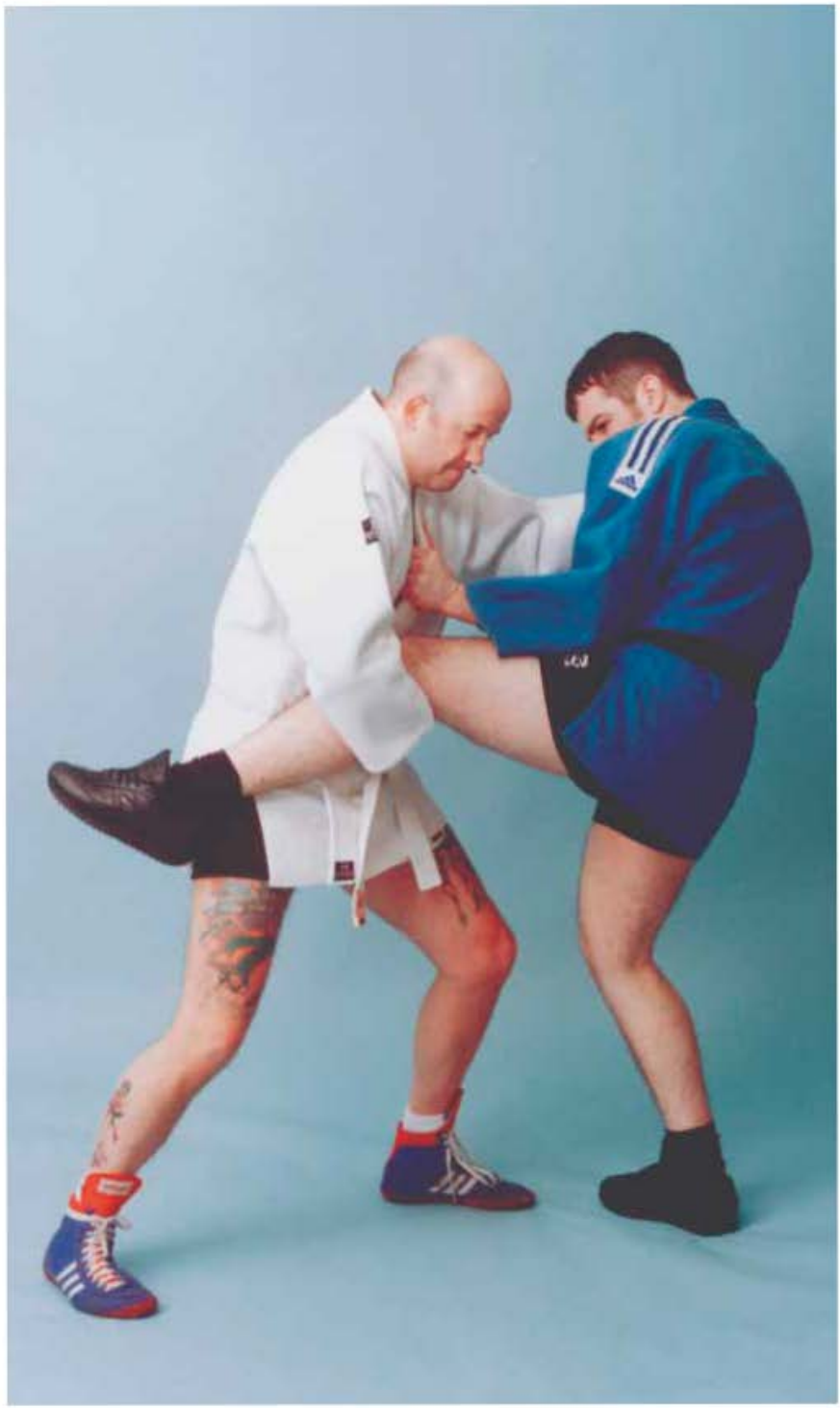
The reason I particularly like this technique is because it works brilliantly from catching a leg that the opponent has tried to attack you with. Very often in a real encounter an opponent tries to kick or knee you and you catch his leg and then don't know what to do with it. The trick is to take advantage of the caught leg and throw the opponent over by using it as an appendage.

This works equally well if you catch a foot, a knee or if you simply bend down and pick the opponent's leg off the floor. For the sake of example we will work from simply picking the leg off the floor.

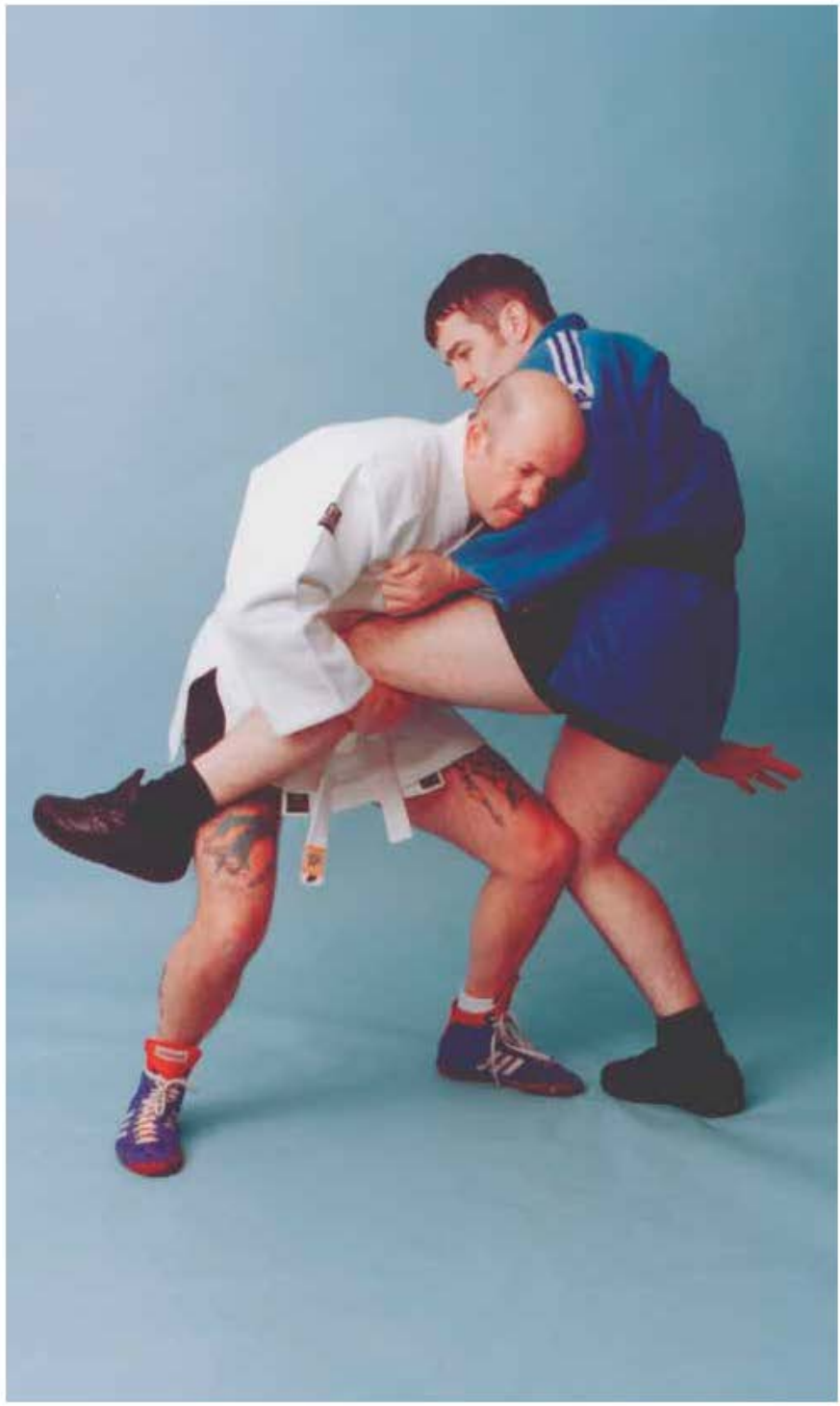
Working from a right grip with a right lead stance, release your left hand from the grip on the opponent's sleeve, reach down and wrap your left arm around the back of his knee, picking his right leg off the floor. From here you are in a position to take an assortment of throws and take-downs. The one you choose is usually determined by what the opponent offers you.

Release your right grip on the opponent's lapel, bend down, using your legs more than your back, and hook your right arm around the back of the opponent's left leg. Pick him off the floor and slam him down.

Sombo Russian Wrestling



Single Leg to Double Leg Take-down



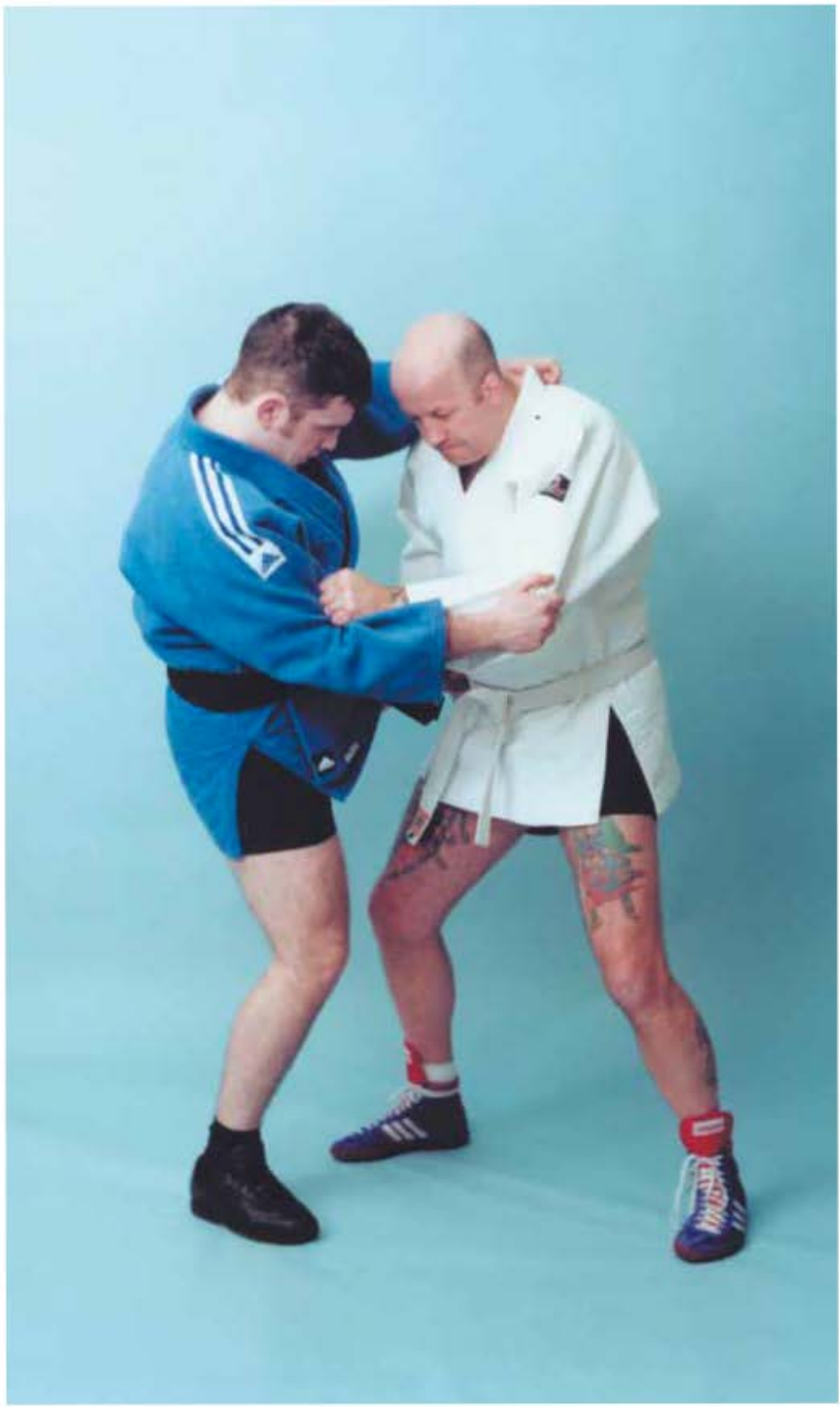
Sombo Russian Wrestling

Chapter Four
Single Leg Pick-up, Reverse Leg Inner Reap

This is a variation of the leg pick-up or the leg catch and it is a variation that I love to employ because it is so easily available. Working from a right grip with a right lead stance, release your left hand from the grip on the opponent's sleeve, reach down and wrap your left arm around the back of his knee, picking his right leg off the floor. Keep your right grip on the lapel, hook your right leg around the back (inside) of the opponent's left supporting leg and reap it off the floor, simultaneously driving him backwards with your right grip and slamming him on to his back or head.

This is a very malleable technique in that, once reaped off the floor, the thrower has the control and the potential to be able to land the opponent on the back of his head in a debilitating action or gently ease him to the floor – depending upon the severity of the situation.

Sombo Russian Wrestling



Single Leg Pick-up, Reverse Leg Inner Reap

If the guy is trying to take your life you may feel that he needs taking to unconsciousness; if he is just a mouth and you feel that the threat is not so great then you have the power to be a little gentler.

This same technique can be employed in exactly the same way, but without the reap, by placing (as opposed to reaping and lifting) your right leg behind the opponent's left leg and just pushing him over it in a tripping action.

Single Leg Pick-up, Reverse Leg Inner Reap

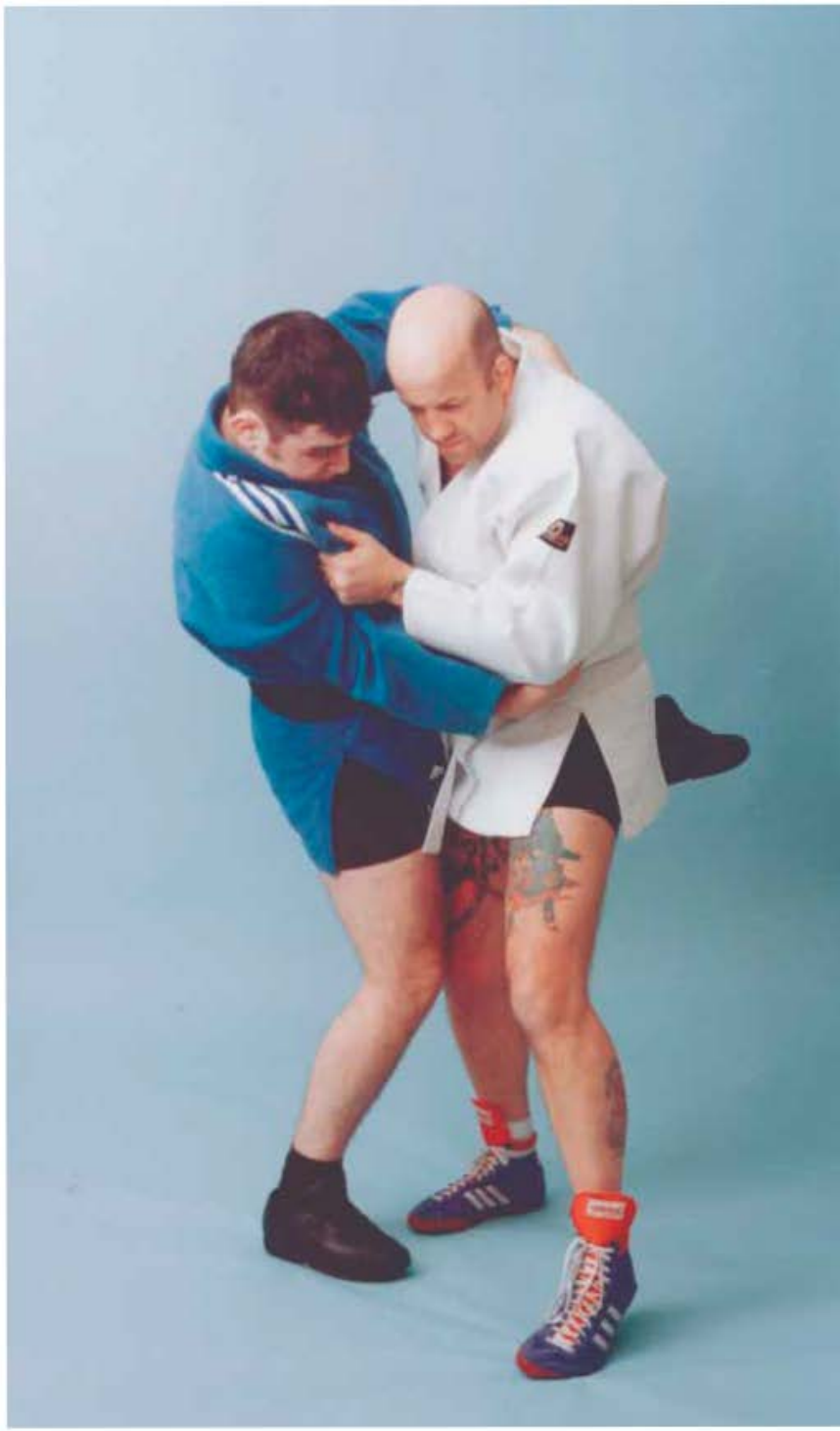
Chapter Five

Single Leg Pick-up, Reverse Leg Outer Reap

This is virtually the same as the last technique, only we are reaping the reverse, with the support leg on the outside as opposed to the inside. This is a more technical throw to employ but the injury potential to the opponent is greater because of the awkward and high fall from the throw.

Working from a right grip and a right lead stance, release your left hand from the grip on the opponent's sleeve, reach down and wrap your left arm around the back of his knee, picking his right leg off the floor. Keep your right grip on the lapel, hook your left leg around the back and outside, of the opponent's left supporting leg and reap it off the floor, simultaneously driving him backwards with your right grip and slamming him on to his back or head.

Single leg Pick-up, Reverse Leg Outer Reap



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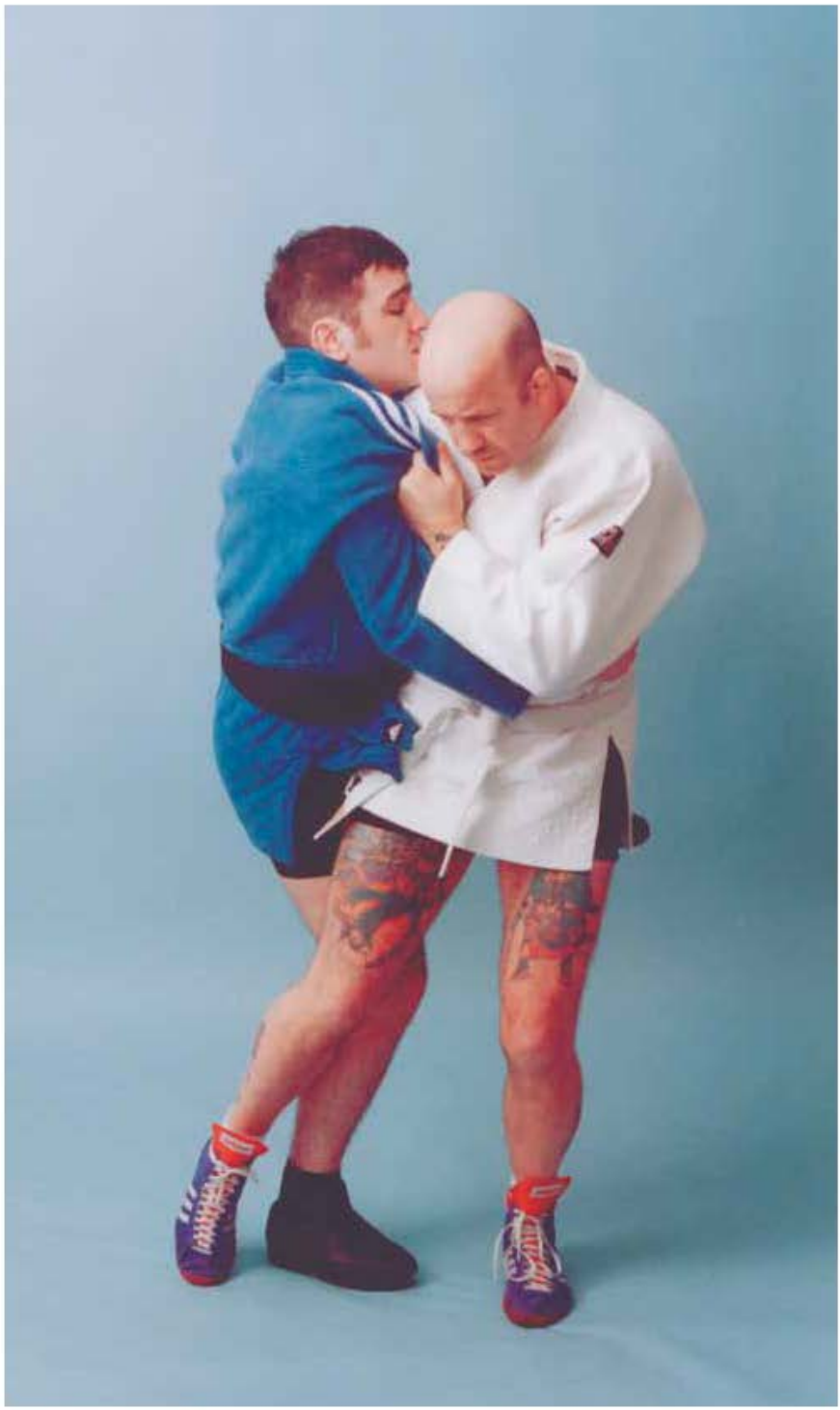


Single leg Pick-up, Reverse Leg Outer Reap

This also is a very malleable technique and how you employ it depends upon the severity of the situation.

This same technique can be employed in exactly the same way, but without the reap, by placing (as opposed to reaping and lifting) your left leg behind the opponent's left leg and just pushing him over it in a tripping action.

Single leg Pick-up, Reverse Leg Outer Reap

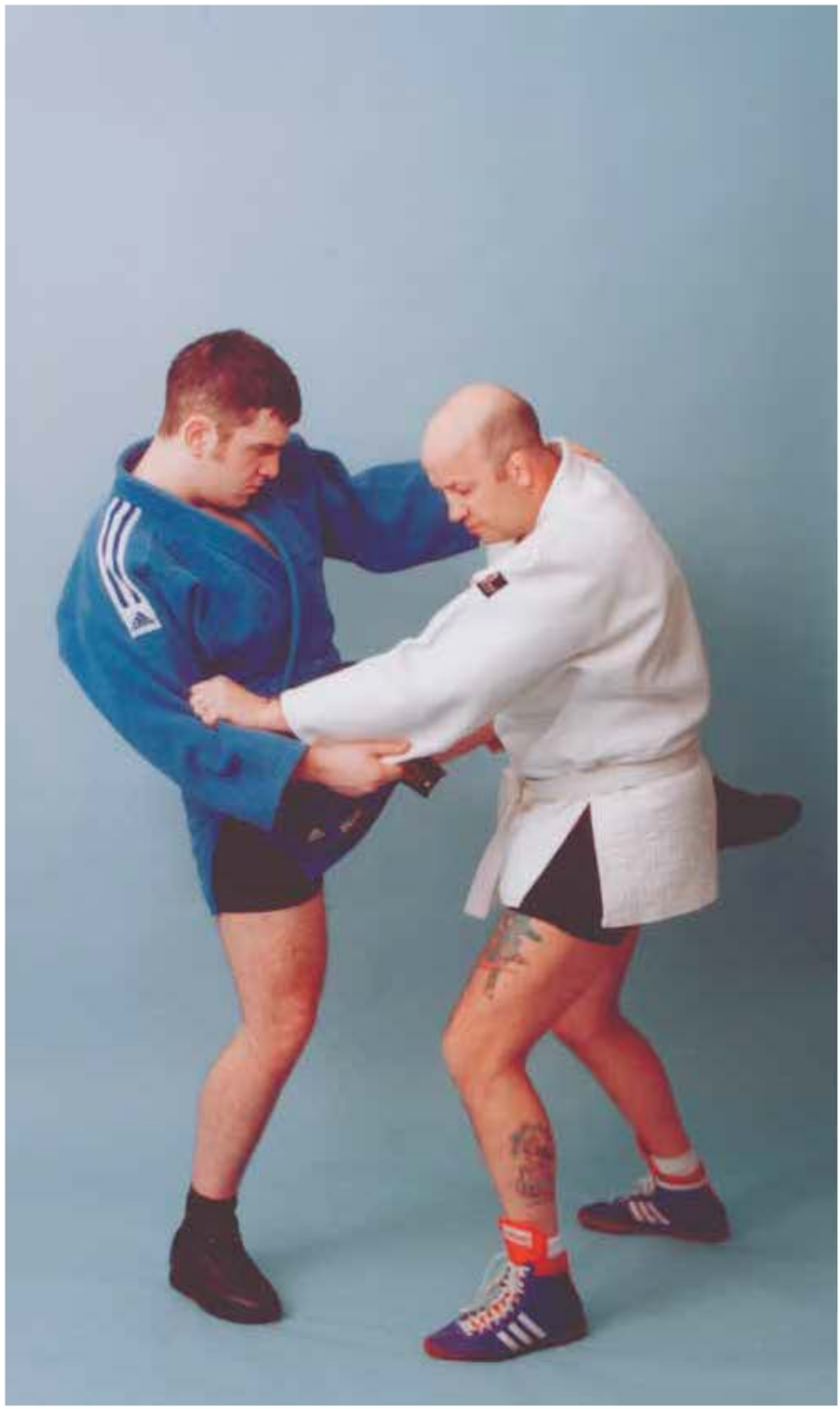
Chapter Six

Single Leg Pick-up, Minor Inner Reap

Taking the single leg take-down with a minor reap, or trip, is another excellent way of taking an opponent off his feet. Personally I like to use the minor reap in a kicking or sweeping action, literally kicking the opponent off the support leg without worry of injuring their ankle en route. Outside the chippy this would be ideal but in the controlled arena you do have to take a little more care not to injure your partner.

Working from a right grip and a right lead stance, release your left hand from the grip on the opponent's sleeve, reach down and wrap your left arm around the back of his knee, picking his right leg off the floor. Keep your right grip on the lapel, hook your left leg around the back and outside of the opponent's left supporting ankle and reap or sweep it off the floor, simultaneously driving him backwards with your left grip and slamming him on to his back or head.

Single Leg Pick-up, Minor Inner Reap



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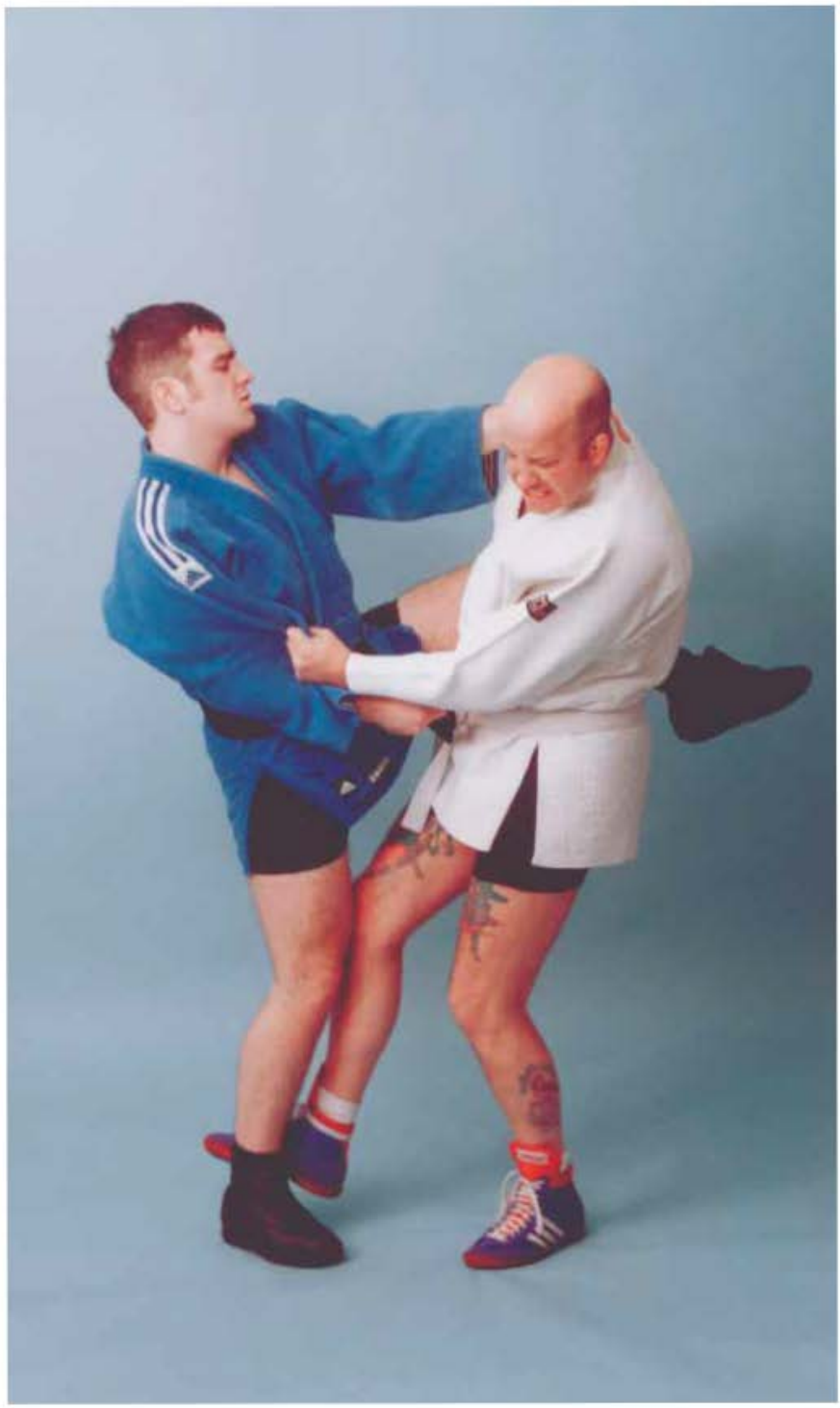
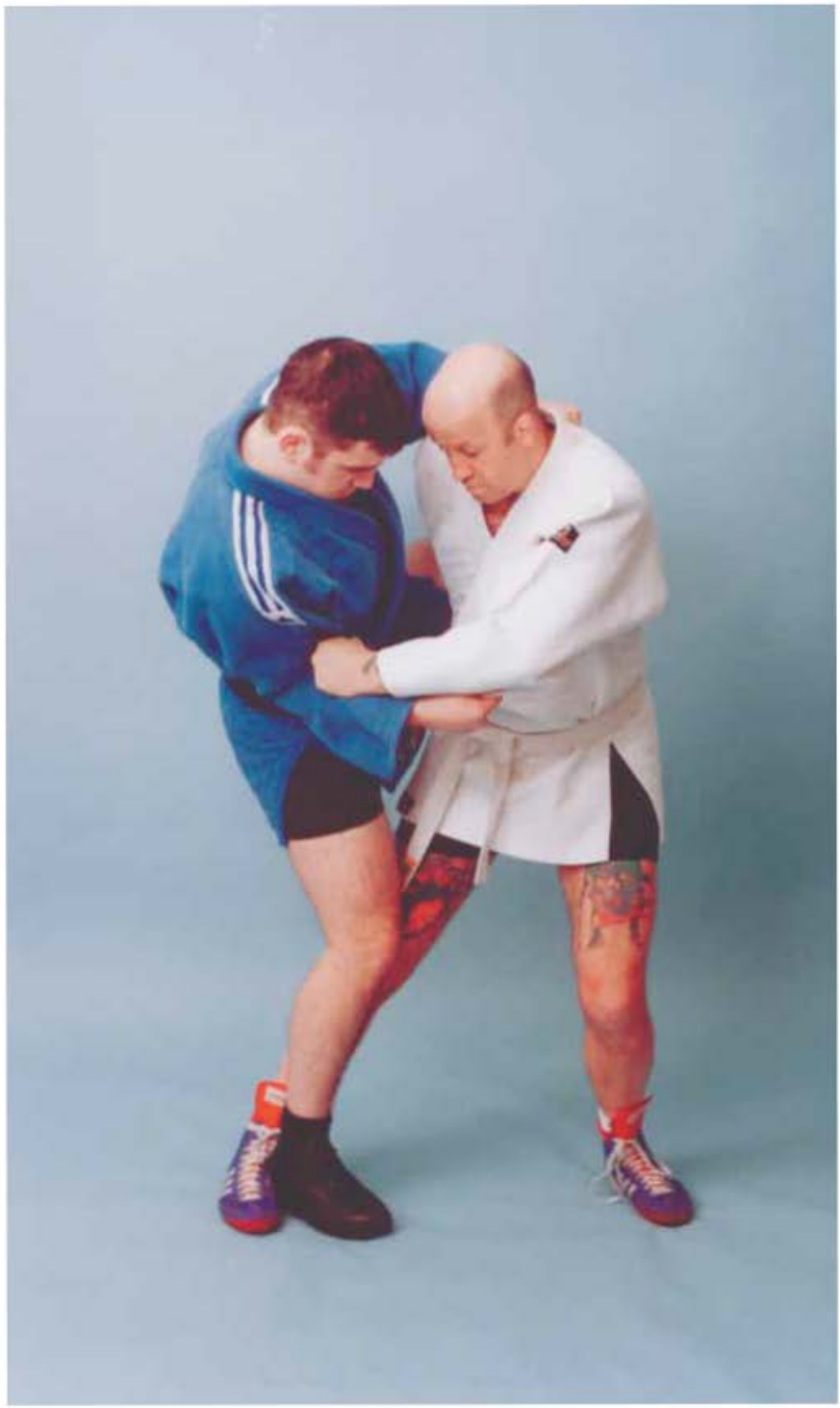


Again, this same technique can be employed in exactly the same way, but without the reap, by placing (as opposed to reaping and lifting) your left leg behind the opponent's left leg and just pushing him over it in a tripping action.

Sombo Russian Wrestling

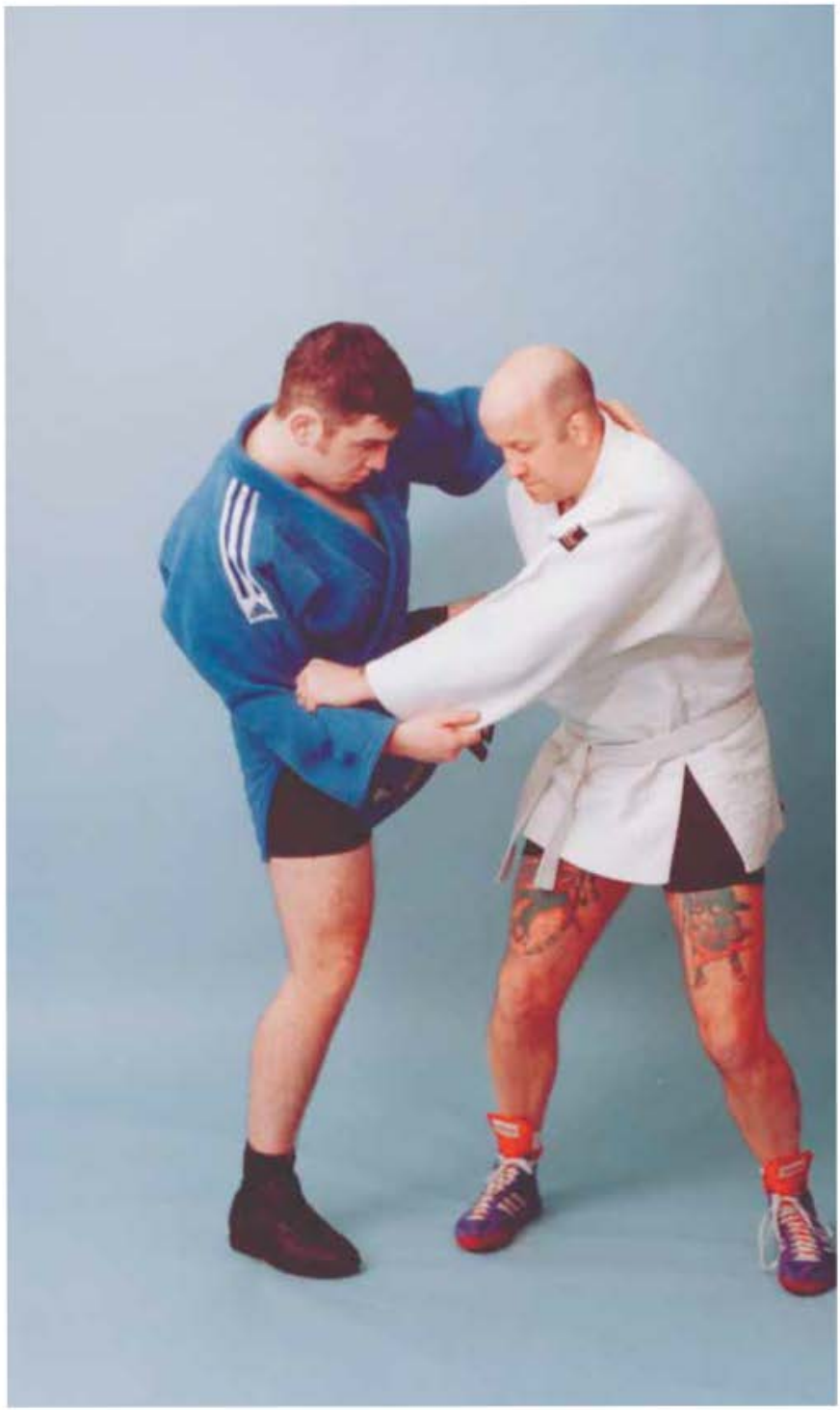


Chapter Seven
Single Leg Pick-up, Body Drop

Adding the body drop to the single leg pick-up takes the throw to another dimension. Very few people, especially in the street scenario, ever get back up from this take-down. However, it is a more complicated throw to master. The results though are worth the extra training time on the mat.

Working from a right grip with a right lead stance, release your right hand from the grip on the opponent's sleeve, reach down and wrap your right arm around the back of his left knee, picking his leg off the floor. Turn your back into the opponent and bring your left leg behind you in a semi-circular action. Then thrust your right leg across in front of the opponent's supporting leg and simultaneously push his left leg high to take his balance and pull down hard on his left sleeve so that he trips over your right leg. Make sure that you bend your left leg at the knee and thrust it straight as you pull him over your right leg. Slam him hard into the floor.

Sombo Russian Wrestling



Sombo Russian Wrestling

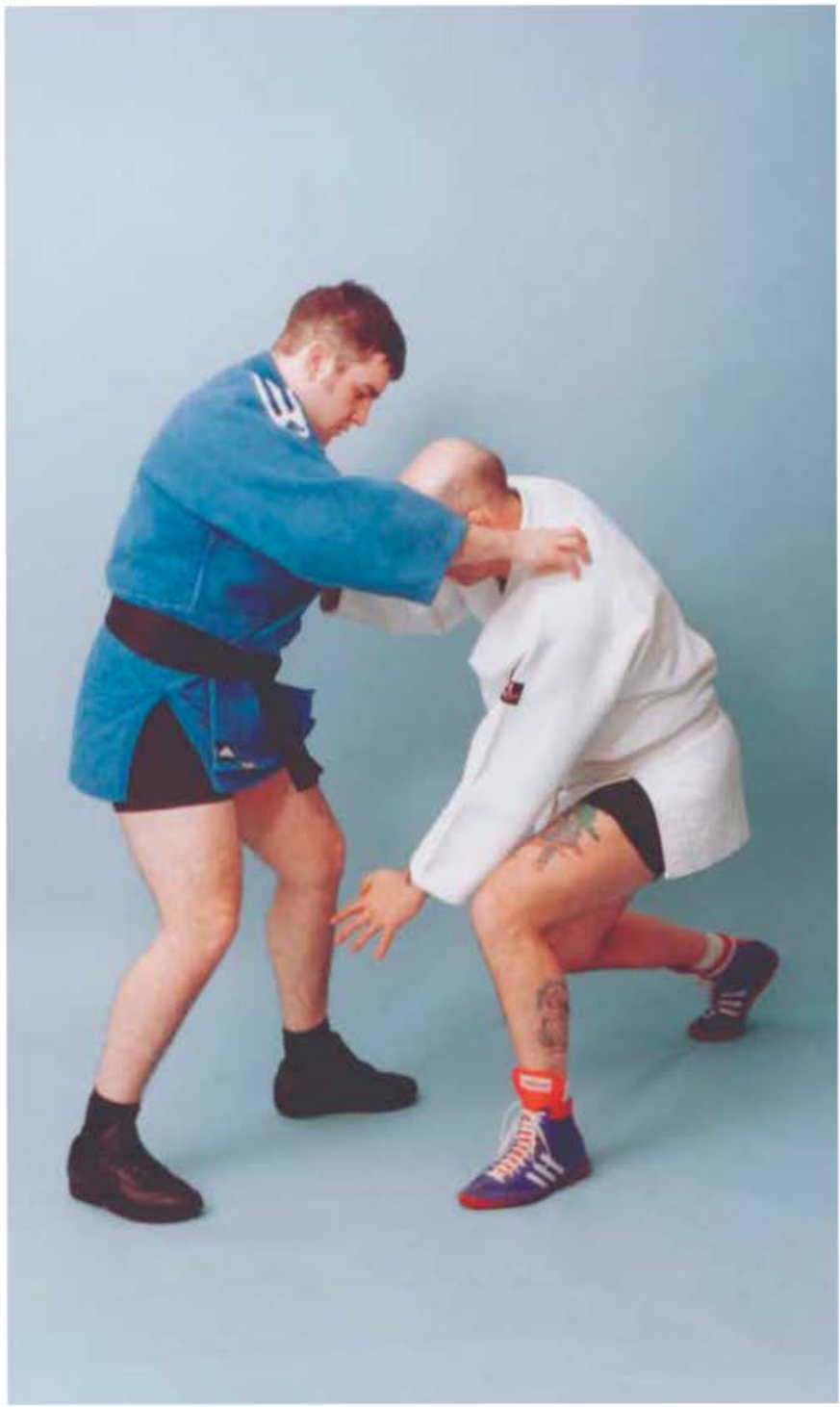
Chapter Eight
Ankle Pick-up

Often it's the simplest throws that work the best when the proverbial poo hits the fan. The ankle pick-up falls into this category because it is so simple, and yet so effective in taking a fellow to the floor. I find that these work well from the standard grip, but they also work very well if you are prostrate and your opponent is vertical.

Just recently one of my own students made the mistake of going to the floor with an attacker outside a busy nightclub. He was controlling him well when, as is often the case in the street scenario, one of his opponent's friends ran over and tried to attack my student whilst he was on still on the ground. My student grabbed around the back of the vertical opponent's ankle, pushed his elbow into his calf and drove him over with only one hand. So this technique, once learned, has many possible adaptations that can be employed on and off the mat.

Sombo Russian Wrestling

From a right lapel grip, reach down and grab around the back of the opponent's right ankle with your left hand. Pull his foot off the floor and towards you whilst simultaneously pulling his weight, with your right hand, over to your left.



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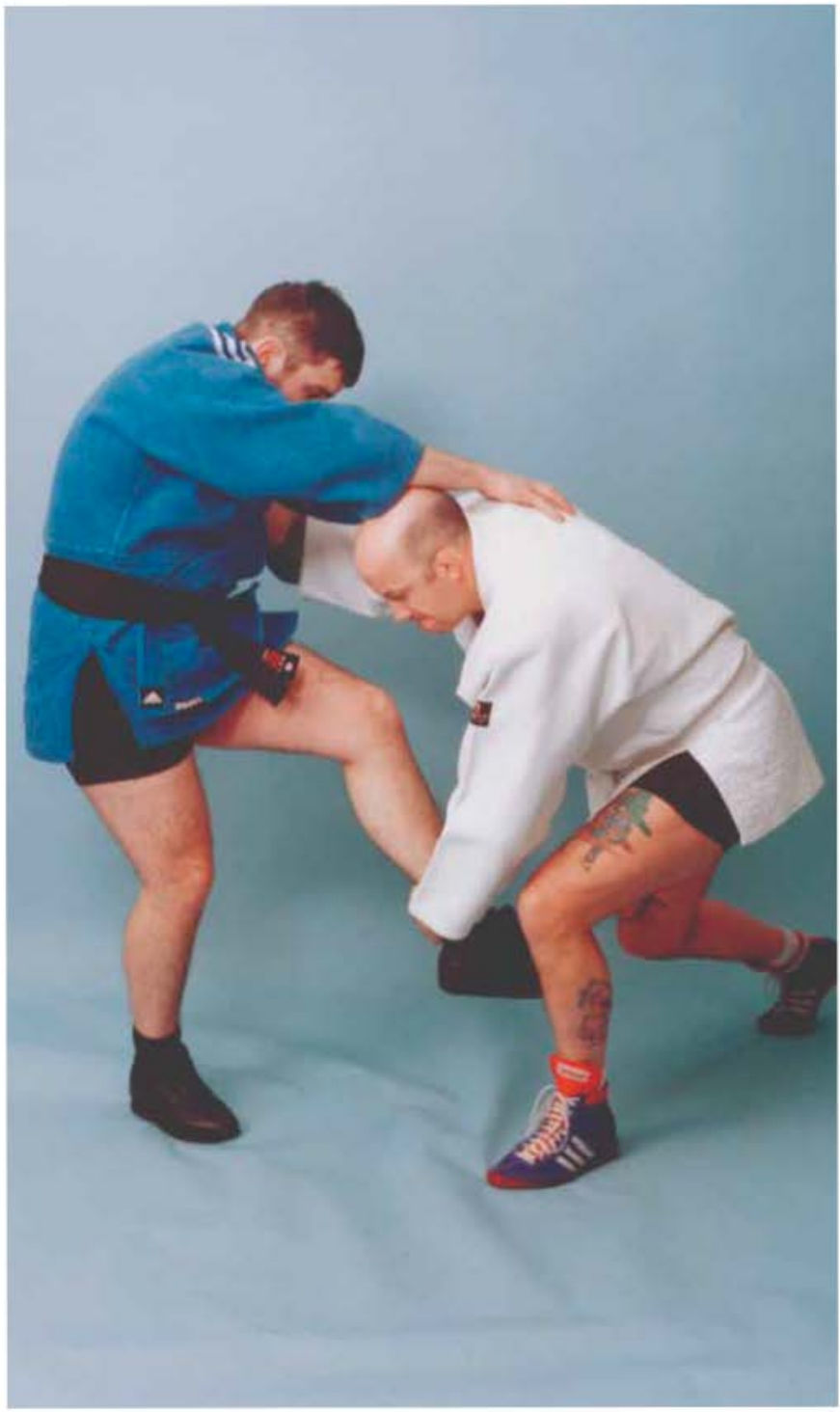

Ankle Pick-up

Chapter Nine
Ankle Pick-up (Inside)

With the inside ankle pick-up we employ the elbow into the opponent's calf to drive him over. It is a simple but effective technique that takes many opponents by surprise.

From a left hand lapel grip, reach down and grab around the back of the opponent's ankle from the inside, thrusting your elbow into the inside of his calf muscle. Simultaneously pull at the ankle and push with the elbow to drive the opponent over.

Ankle Pick-up (Inside)

Sombo Russian Wrestling

Ankle Pick-up (Inside)

Chapter Ten
Belt-assisted Hip Throw

The Russian players love using the opponent's belt to aid in certain throws. You might say that this is unrealistic because, in the street, attackers are very unlikely to be wearing a martial arts belt, and you'd be right. What I have found though is that it doesn't have to be a belt that you grab; you can use anything to aid the throw such as the back of the attacker's jacket, trousers, jumper or shirt.

With the belt-assisted hip throw you simply reach, or better still throw, your right arm over the opponent's back and hook on to anything you can, as shown, turn your hip into the opponent and bend at the knees so that your bottom is pushing into his lower abdomen area. Straighten your legs, pulling the opponent on to your hips and throw him over and on to his back.

Belt-assisted Hip Throw

Sombo Russian Wrestling

Sombo Russian Wrestling

The Russians are very keen on this across-the-back type grip and make very good use of it in their free-fighting and self-defence.

Almost identical, other than the inclusion of the right leg used in a sweeping action, is the belt-assisted uchi mata.

This has exactly the same entry as the latter hip throw, only you should step a little deeper with the left leg and sweep the right leg high in between the opponent's legs, driving him on to his back.

Belt-assisted Hip Throw

Sombo Russian Wrestling

Again, a slight variation of the hip throw is the belt-assisted harai goshi. It uses the same entry, but step a little more to the right with your left leg and sweep the right leg to the outside of the opponent's right thigh, slamming him to the floor.

Sombo Russian Wrestling

Chapter 11
Belt-assisted Major Outside Reap

Another good belt-assisted throw is the devastating outside reap. I have been caught with this once or twice in randori so I can vouch for its potency.

With the major outside reap the catch is still the same throw your arm over the right shoulder of the opponent and grab his belt (or anything else). Step forward and to the outside of the opponent's right leg with your left leg, sweep your right leg hard and straight at the back of the opponent's right leg at the same time as you drive his bodyweight, via your right grip, on to the same leg. Slam him to the floor and on to his back.

Sombo Russian Wrestling

Conclusion

Of all the throws in the Russian system of sombo wrestling these detailed herein are the ones that I most favour. Of course there are a lot more, but many of those left are identical – or very similar – to those in other wrestling styles. I have tried not to repeat the same throws as those detailed in the other books in this series. To make these throws work you have to make them your own with persistent and accurate practise. It is not practise that makes perfect as people are always telling us; it is perfect practise that makes perfect. I once did thousands of outer reaping throws on a tree only to realise that I was doing it all wrong. This means starting all over again. Try to avoid this if you can. It'll save you many hours. Unlearning bad habits can be an arduous and very time-consuming task. When you do it wrong you become very good at a bad technique, then to get it right you have to take a backward step and relearn it right from the beginning. So take your time when you practise: quality is far better than quantity.

As a final word I should reiterate that, as far as self-defence is concerned, I always believe that you should avoid a physical response whenever possible. Violence is not the answer in the majority of cases and a physical response should only be undertaken if no other option is open to you. I always try to avoid confrontational situations as much as possible; I employ verbal dissuasion if I can't escape, and loophole or posture if dissuasion has failed me. If and when the physical is called for I will attack the very first instant that I believe an opponent is going to attack me. Attack is the best means of defence.

If you make a mistake anywhere along the line and an opponent manages to grab hold of you, that is when the techniques in this book are going to come in handy. So throwing and grappling work only usually come into play when you have made a mistake.

For the record, I never court grappling range in a real-life scenario unless it is a one on one fight. Work from a fence if

you have to be physical, attack using your hands and make the finish a clinical one.

However, as I have said we all make mistakes; even monkeys fall out of the trees. We should not be ignorant or naïve enough to believe that we are never going to make a mistake and hit the floor. Always prepare for the worst-case scenario, just in case.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read my book and good luck with your training.

God's blessing.
Geoff Thompson 2001

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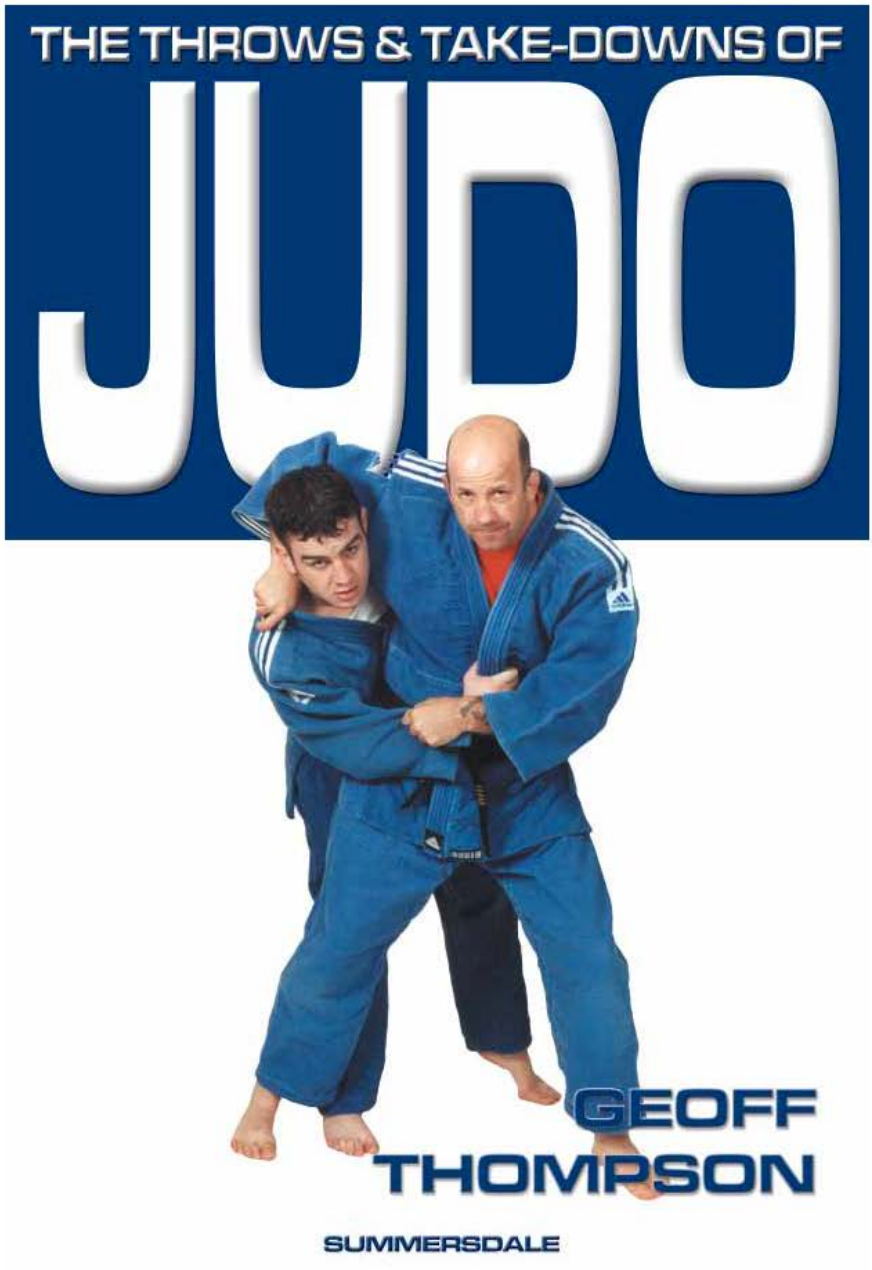

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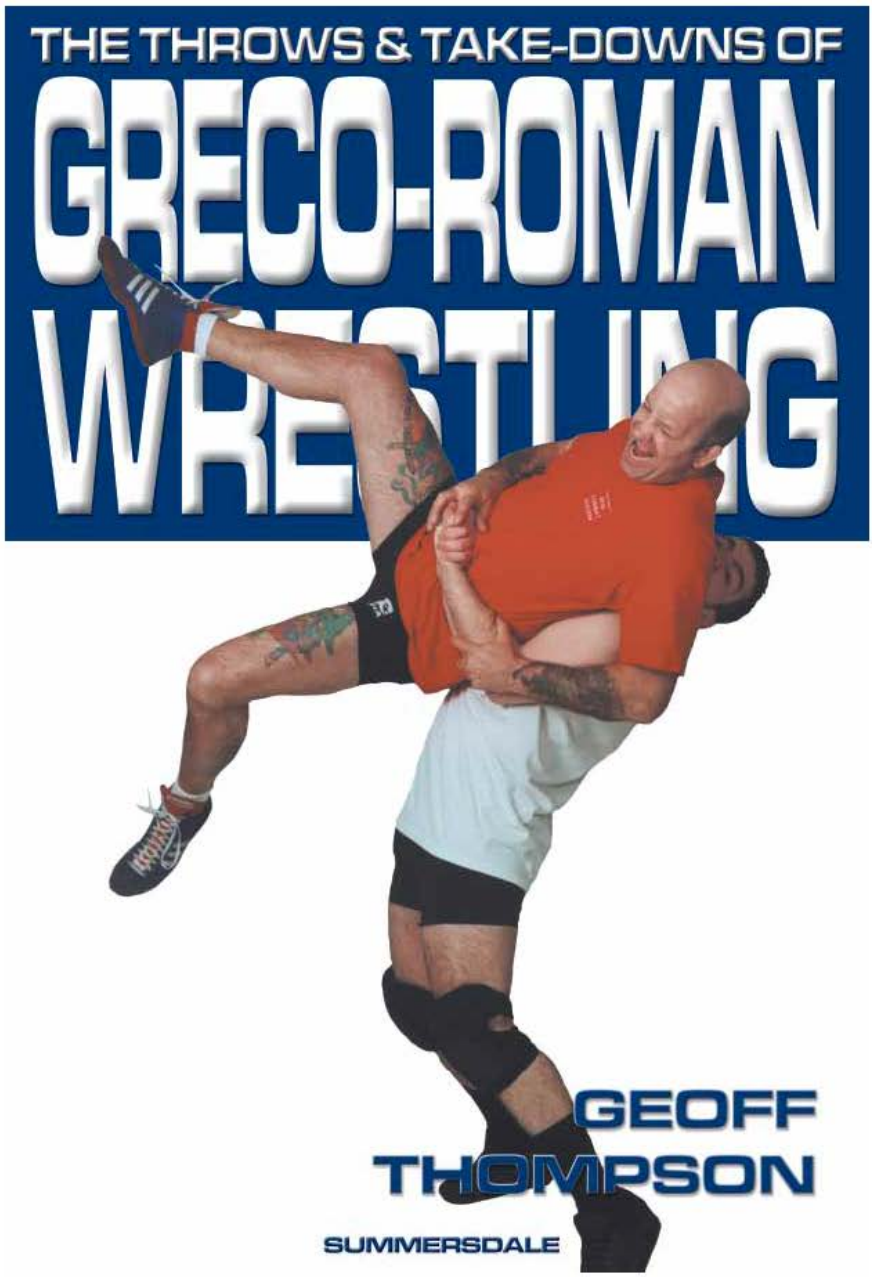

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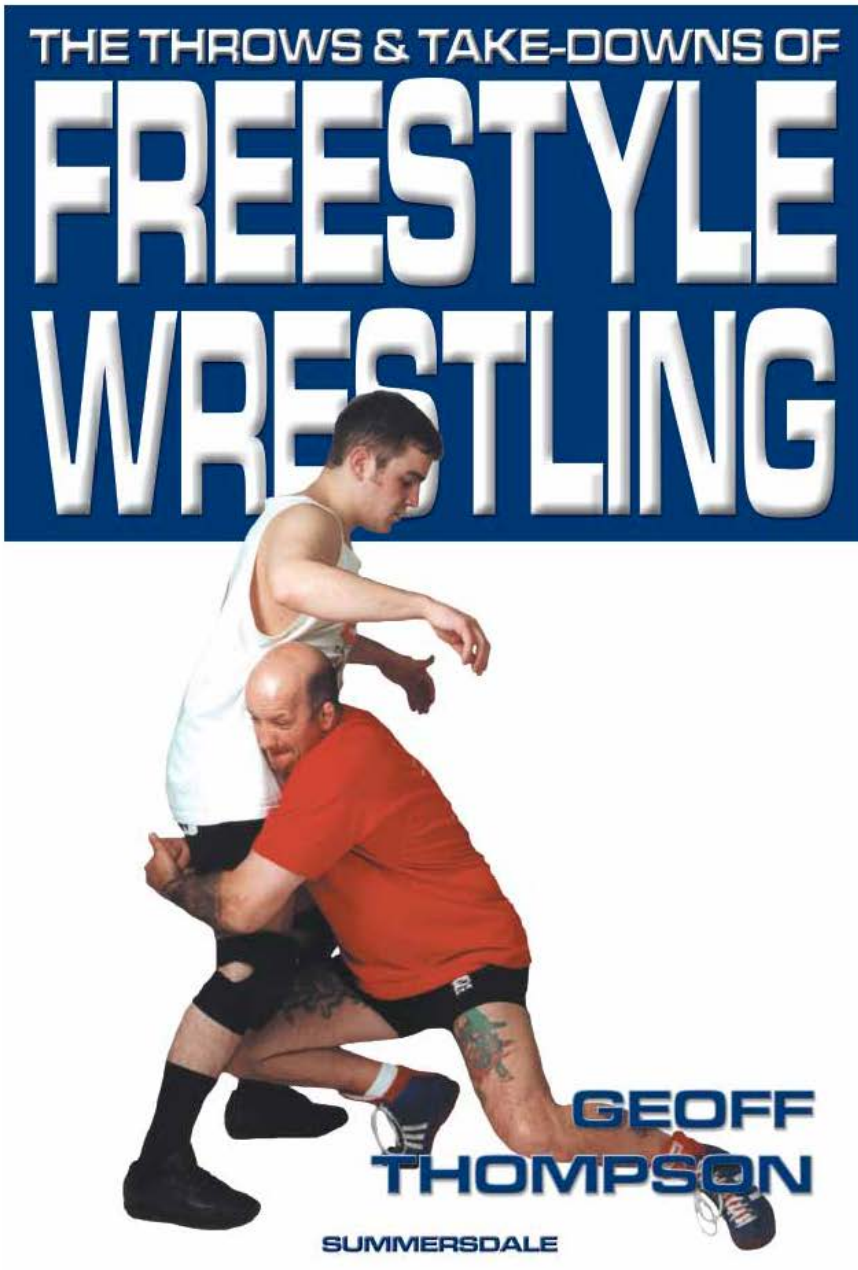

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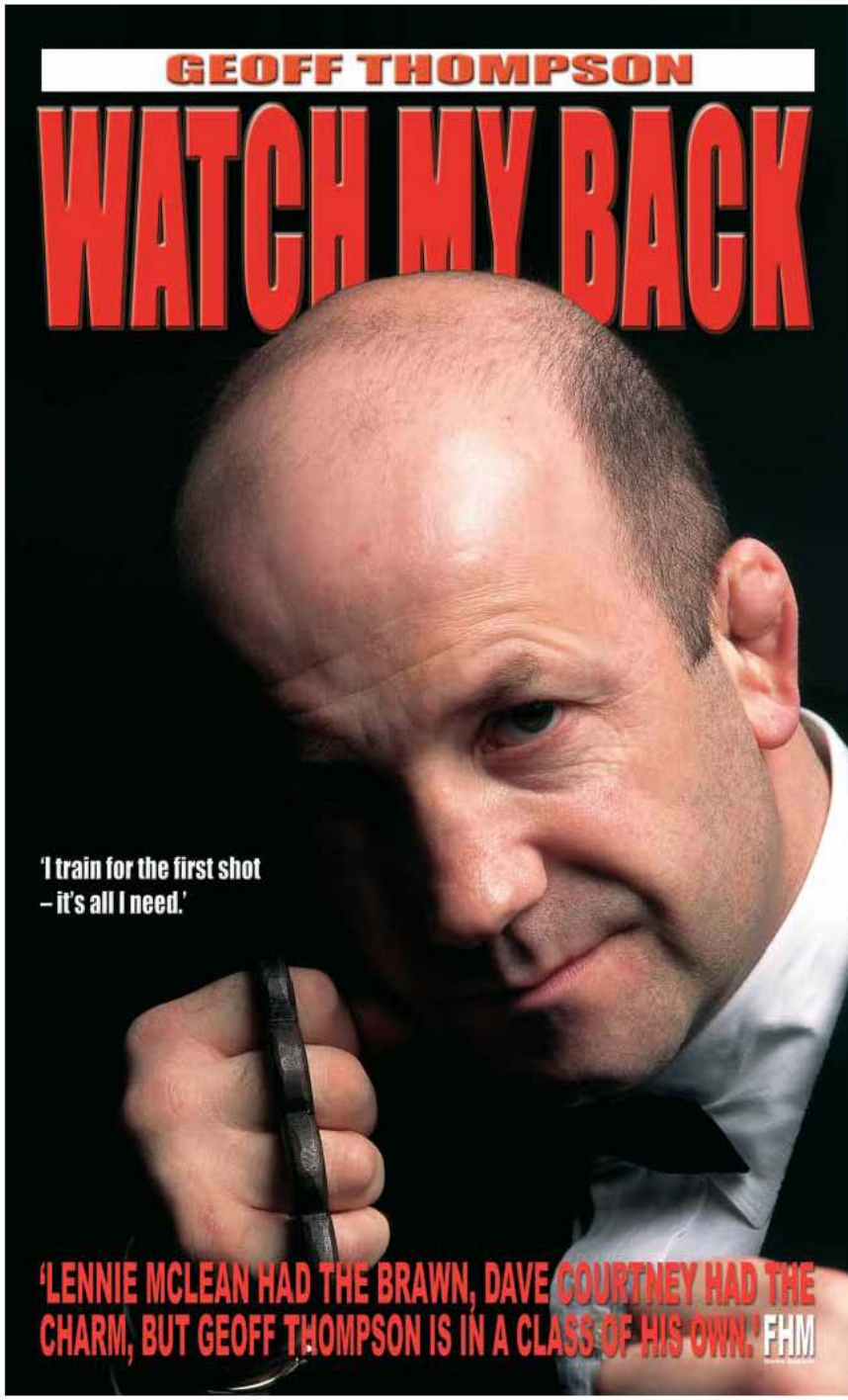
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About the author

Geoff Thompson claims that his biological birthdate is 1960, though his hair-line goes right back to the First World War.

He has worked as a floor sweeper, chemical worker, pizza maker, road digger, hod carrier, martial-arts instructor, bricklayer, picture seller, delivery driver and nightclub bouncer before giving up 'proper work' in 1992 to write full time.

He is now a bestselling author, BAFTA-nominated screenwriter, magazine columnist, playwright and novelist.

He lives in Coventry with his wife Sharon, and holds a 6th dan in Japanese karate, 1st dan in Judo and was voted the number one self-defence author in the world by *Black Belt Magazine* USA.

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Foreword

Before you start reading this piece (thank you for taking the time) I'd like to make it clear that the following views are my opinion, born from experience in the world of reality, and not intended to insult or debase other martial arts or artists. I have a great love and deep respect for all the arts, so if somewhere within the next 24,000 words I do offend then you have my unreserved apology right now. I am not a politician, neither do I use my writing as a podium for biased opinion; what I am, however, is a realist. I'm honest and emphatic. Honesty often has an inadvertent habit of offending. So please read with an open and honest mind and if what I have to say helps then great, if not then you've lost nothing but the short time it takes to read.

We all have something to teach and we all have something to learn. It takes a very enlightened person to realise and accept what he lacks, but it takes a very brave person to do something about it.

Much has been said of late, in conversation and in print, about ultimate fighting arts, ultimate being the operative word used mainly to sell copy as opposed to art.

The Collins GEM English Dictionary informs us that Ultimate is 'the final in a series or process; highest or most significant'. I have even been guilty of using the word myself in a bid to better peddle my wares.

What most fail to realise is that all arts are ultimate in their own arena.

In the western boxing ring, with boxing rules, the pugilist is, no doubt, the ultimate combatant; in the arena of Olympic Wrestling - with wrestling rules - the grappler is potentate and in the Thai boxing ring - with Thai rules of course - the Thai fighter comes away with the accolade.

If, however, you put a wrestler in the boxing ring with boxing rules, the wrestler will come a very sorry second place, and vice versa, but that doesn't make the boxer any better than the wrestler or the wrestler any better than the boxer, not at all. What it does make them is the best in their own field and to their own rules. I do not look for, neither am I interested in, who is the best fighter. What I do look for and I definitely am interested in is what can I learn from the boxer/wrestler/Thai boxer/Wing Chun man etc.

I had a friend, a very capable boxer of professional standard, who fought in the ring, at his insistence, to boxing rules with a brilliant international Karataka, a phenomenal kicker who should remain nameless. Not surprisingly, the boxer tore the kicker a new arse. Afterwards he couldn't wait to tell me what an easy fight he'd had and what a poor fighter the karataka had been, as though fighting a man entwined in rules meant anything at all. I have absolutely no doubt at all that had this particular boxer fought the same karataka in the dojo - to karate rules - the boxer would have been taken completely off the planet in seconds and would probably have needed an operation to remove the kicker's foot from his stomach.

Although the Karate man lost the fight in the boxing ring I had more respect for him than the boxer, he'd gone in to a foreign arena severely impeded by rules and regulations and 'had a go' in a search for the grail of improvement.

I told the boxer this and said that I'd have a lot more respect for him if he'd displayed the same courage as the karataka and fought him at a dojo and not in a ring. Sadly my friend missed the point; all his ego would allow him to see was his embryonic victory. With this conquest (I use the word reluctantly) he lost all respect for Karate as a fighting art. After all, he surmised, if he had beaten this international player with such ease, how much simpler would an average Karate man would be? In his victory he learned nothing.

A couple of years later the same boxer ventured into my club to box with one of my students, a capable boxer with a heavy background in traditional Karate. At the start of the fight they fought full contact and to boxing rules. There was no doubting the ferocity and prowess of the boxer's hands: he was brilliant. Although my student fought a hard and brave fight he was catching some heavy bombs. After a few rounds of boxing, and with the consent of both fighters, I changed the rules slightly and allowed the use of kicking. Within a minute the boxer had been on the floor more times than the cleaner's mop and was incapable of carrying on. My student had used only one kick to reach this end - a Thai leg kick. The boxer came to see me a week later, still limping, and told me that he hadn't been able to attend work for a week and was absolutely amazed at how effective the kicker was. This day, in his defeat, he learned many valuable lessons that could not have been taught any other way, not least always to respect exponents of every art and that, in our own arena, we are all kings.

I have also witnessed good street fighters being trounced in the controlled arena by average trained fighters who have said to me afterwards 'I thought he was supposed to be a good street fighter!'

What many of these people fail to recognise is that to deny a karataka kicking, a boxer punching, a wrestler wrestling or a street fighter street fighting etc is tantamount to tying him to a chair and then asking him to defend himself.

When I first went into armature and professional boxing, as a 2nd dan karataka some years ago, I did not expect to hold my own in a foreign arena. I went in as a beginner and took many beatings to learn a new art. The same when I went into wrestling, I didn't go in there as a boxing coach and a fourth dan in Karate I went in there as a novice wrestler and I got beaten more than the proverbial egg until I learned and became proficient at that art also.

The indomitable Gracies in America have gone some way to redress the balance by creating the UFC (Ultimate Fight Competition) in America where any combatant of any weight and from any system can enter.

The restrictions are few and reality hits you like a hammer in the eye in this arena. It has been proven over and again, the grappler seems to prevail and succeed against all other systems.

The critics have been quick to say how scruffy and aesthetic displeasing the UFC is (like or loath the UFC it does make its point rather well) because, they claim, the kickers and punchers have not been of a high enough standard. Welcome to the real world lads. Scruffy is where it's at when the pavement is your arena. The reason the UFC is so scruffy is not because of the poor standard of the vertical fighters - some of them are world class in their own arts - rather it is because 'that's reality', in a real fight scruffy is exactly how it gets.

But twenty years of crisp martial art, of compliance and of celluloid pier pressure has indoctrinated many contemporary fighters with the belief that 'if it don't look nice it's no good'.

One of the main reasons why Judo has become, predominantly, a standing art is because ground fighting is not pleasing to the untrained eye, and this is also the reason why the devastating art of amateur wrestling, once pre-dominantly a ground fighting art also, is now such a minority sport. It is also the main reason behind the decline, nay death, of the 'real' wrestling and wrestlers of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. Legendary fighters like Stanislous Zabisco, George Hackenschmidt, Bert Asarati, Karl Pojello etc are never heard of any more. People did not (even though they said they did) want reality they wanted flash, they did not want three second encounters they wanted epic battles, they did not want opponents being mauled to the ground they wanted them balletically thrown with a spectacular suplex. It was a paradox:

the spectator wanted epic battles and panache, and they got it in the end, but insisted that the fights be real and were absolutely appalled when the wrestlers turned to 'show', to give them what they wanted. So now we have ended up with spectacular, but totally unreal, bouts of wrestling, and not because the fighters cannot fight for real rather because the audience does not want real - even if they say they do.

The great Jack Sherry of Alaska, world wrestling champion in the early 1900s, would defeat opponents so quickly that spectators would often still be coming into the stadium when the fight was already over - Jack was a promoter's nightmare but he absolutely refused to 'show' to please the crowd. Sherry never lost a fall and toured the world offering 10,000 dollars to anyone who could pin him or any boxer who could stand up to him (with no holds barred) for 90 seconds. No one ever collected the 10,000 dollars.

Eventually, due mostly to public demand and strong willed promoters, wrestlers were forced to 'show'. It was then that wrestling started to fall into decline, which was a crying shame because the wrestlers of old were marvellous athletes capable of some amazing displays of strength and stamina. Bert Asarati - one of my personal favourites - fought in over 7000 fights around the world, losing only a handful, and finished his working life as a kind of mobile club minder. Whenever there was trouble at a local club the patrons would call for Mr Asarati, who would arrive in a limo. Five foot six tall, weighing 17 stone, he took up two seats on a train yet at the age of 45 he could still hold a one armed hand stand for 45 seconds. He single-handedly calmed any trouble. Often just his presence alone was enough. On one occasion he was called to a huge riot at a club, and when he arrived the patron was astounded, 'But we have a riot' he said 'and you have come on your own'. Mr Asarati looked at the battling crowds and then back to the patron

and said very calmly 'One man one riot'. He then quickly dispelled the fighting crowds - most ran just at the sight of him.

In the martial arts we have, to a degree, suffered the same fate. Everyone has become so obsessed about getting Olympic recognition that their arts have become watered down and aesthetic, the 'blood and snot' elements of martial that disqualified them as spectator sports were removed to make them more pleasing to the spectator. Many of our combatants have become brilliant athletes but our art is a poor and diluted facsimile of its former self. Many arts have become neutered, their potency surgically removed by the keen blade of the political briefcase martial artist that sits at every association meeting scoring ippons and wazaris over his fellow members with verbatim quotations of association rules, paragraphs and sub paragraphs. The same ilk that killed wrestling to make it more commercial are 'corpsing up' the martial arts.

I have no argument with sport or the Olympics or anything else for that matter but let's keep it in context: martial art is not sport - although the sport element is a good by-product. It is not 'show', though show is a nice was to 'peddle our wares' - it is many things not least a method of self defence.

Many of the modern martial artists have lost sight of their original aim. Extinction is biting at our heels and, if we are not careful, we will suffer the fate of those before us.

Stripped of reality many of the arts have become emaciated aerobic routines that entertain on the stage but do not function in the arena. Subsequently, when placed under the pressure of reality, they crumble. The UFC has already shown some elements of this to all but the blind.

However, as big a fan as I am of the UFC, it is still different from defence in the street for many reasons.

Three Second Fighter

Street defence is not match fighting - that noble art died with my father's generation. Rather it is, mostly, a three second affair where the leading technique is dialogue and deception and, more often than not, one blow - usually a punch - decides the outcome. This is what I call the 'sniper option', or what the original 'men' of martial art would have called the one punch kill.

That is the ethos of 'The Three Second Fighter', forming a game plan, perfecting one or two short range techniques as a main artillery, using awareness of our surroundings and of the enemy as our bedrock, deception as our primer, distraction as our trigger and sniper option to eclipse the enemy.

This book is not meant to be disrespectful to any martial art or artists. I am a big fan of all the arts and have many friends in many systems. So, if offence is taken then you have my unreserved apologies before we start: my aim is to educate not exasperate.

Chapter One
Changing times

I am aware that the times are changing, but so many people, it would seem, are not. The reason I am aware is because I am still out there and can see just how badly prepared many people are for the realities of street combat. They don't have a game plan, a main artillery (what's that?) or a support system. All they have, no offence intended, is an antiquated art and a false sense of security. They say that change is sacrilege - I say that change is sense if survival is your pre-requisite.

Some claim that they have no interest in self protection/ adaptation etc. If that is the case and you are training art for art's sake - an admirable goal let me add - the workability of art will be off no concern to you and to read on will be a waste of your time.

Others claim to have long since transcended such trivia and now train art for art's sake and practice technique for technique's sake, yet when you ask them about the modern enemy, about game plans, about empirical knowledge they haven't got a clue. They have no reference points and cannot meet the question with an articulate answer, so, in a way, they have transcended embryonically. You cannot rise above the physical elements of martial until you have first met and overcome them - like trying to take an advanced driving test before you have learned how to drive. Many people use transcendency and 'art' as a hiding place because reality scares the pants off them and they don't have an answer. Some of them would like to find an answer but their ego will not allow them to climb down from their high, often self erected, pedestal and become a beginner again in order to acquire the knowledge. Deep

down they know that they are travelling down the wrong path but bury that knowledge deep into the sub-conscious. Others still see a glimpse of the truth in an article/book/video or on a seminar but are simply not strong enough to accept it because to admit may mean to change direction and after going the wrong way for so many years they can't bear the thought of having to go all the way back and start again.

As Sir Winston Churchill said 'Many men stumble upon the truth then get back up and walk off as though nothing happened'.

This is not to say that these people are not working hard hacking away to make a path through their metaphoric jungle, rather it is to say that they are simply hacking in the wrong jungle.

Others still, put up a fence to hide their inadequacies by trying to ridicule the messenger saying that it is he who has lost his 'way' and not them.

A friend once tried this tired routine on me. He hinted that I'd lost my 'way' because I left traditional Karate as a second dan and that my grades since then, even though they were all bona fide and with a governing body, were not 'real' grades. He felt that because I left Karate and found my own direction I had sold out - lost my way and now taught a diluted art. Basically, I have many grades in many systems but they mean very little to me. I haven't worn a black belt for many years and whilst it is nice to hold the grades I will not use them as a crutch to support an ailing mentality, neither do I condemn others for staying with tradition and with the grading syllabus - I think it is a fine idea.

I never lost my way, I just found a better way for me and was strong enough to change direction even though I knew I'd be seen by many as a maverick.

You don't have to change arts to meet the modern enemy, you only have to change conceptions and update so that it fits in with the present environment and adapt to the aggressor of today.

The power base of all arts should be that its exponents develop enlightenment and become better people, that they temper ferocious fighting ability with kindness and compassion and that they learn to control their negative emotions like greed, envy, jealousy, ego etc. Ultimately their integrity should be without question. Enlightenment should allow them to have a full perspective of their own weaknesses and strengths both physically and mentally (how many times have you heard an instructor say 'we don't need to grapple in our art because we are too good to be taken to ground' or 'our art is too dangerous to pressure test' etc?). It should also allow them a paradoxical understanding of other systems and that theirs is not the only way. The true warrior, the one who has nothing to prove to himself and no ego to defend, will be able to walk away from a potentially confrontational situation.

And yet we look around us at our seniors, the ones that we wish to emulate, and they often display all the bad characteristics that you might expect of a lower graded person. Many are not honest, they cheat on their partners, they are egotists - they refuse to let their students train in other systems or with other instructors, they are envious when others around them, even their own students, succeed when instead they should be pleased. Many are greedy, ungrateful, discourteous even bullying.

When I teach an art I try to teach my students to be nice people. If they find themselves confronted by a potentially threatening situation I teach them first to avoid, second to escape, third to use dissuasive verbal and, as a last resort, to be as ferocious as the situation demands. In the present climate that is very ferocious indeed.

This is not to decry all martial artists: I have met many people who are excellent role models and who have truly found their way, people I look up to; sadly I have also met many who have drifted to the dark side

To the people that read my books, those perceptive enough to be searching for the grail of martial, I think is important that you know where I'm coming from. I'm not frightened to tell you how it is out there (in your face) but I'm not frightened to tell you either that violence should be a last resort. That's not to say that you let your aggressor attack first. If you can't walk away from a situation you should, out of necessity, be pre-emptive - rather it is to say that if there is a more affable solution to a smack in the eye, use it.

I've digressed a little, par for the course with me. Changing times means updating our arts. In every other aspect of society things around us update to keep in line with evolution: cars change every year, computers seem to change and update every other minute, modern warfare/weapons etc are constantly under review. And yet in the martial arts we are still practising concepts, in the hope that they will enable us to better defend ourselves in what is fast becoming a sticky world, that were better designed to fight samurai on horseback. Amazingly, and this kind of logic absolutely astounds me. People say, 'well - it's been around for thousands of years and it worked for our forefathers so there must be something in it'! A horse and cart worked for our forefathers, but that doesn't mean that we should give up the 2.5 injection.

Again, this does not mean abandoning arts that have taken thousands of years to develop, rather it means altering or tailoring them to fit the new environment - the modern enemy. We are no longer fighting a long range enemy at a pre-arranged time on a battlefield. We are no longer facing brave warriors with budo as their way. We are facing a cowardly enemy, a deceptive enemy, a short range enemy and our time of battle is not pre-arranged, we are rarely forewarned of an imminent attack, there will be no warm up, no formal bow, no slap of hand or touch of glove - most people are taken out of the game before they even realise that they are in it. Do you really think that if the founders of these systems were

around today that they'd still be working with their original technique and concepts? Not a chance. They'd have updated in a hurry, let me tell you.

This suite of clothes that we call martial art is ill-fitting for the 21st century, but that does not mean that we must discard it, rather we should re-tailor it so that it does fit. Let's toss the horse and cart into the museums and get us a vehicle that will stand the fast pace of contemporary violence - or fall victim to the onslaught of the modern aggressor. You do not have to throw away tradition/kata/forms/etiquette etc. because there will always be a place for these worthy attributes - if you go down and train with Gary Spiers, the godfather of applied karate, you will see him still teaching the karate rudiments. But he teaches them with a realistic bent.

Chapter Two
Awareness - the power base

'Whilst it is true that prevention is better than cure one still has to address the physical response necessary when a situation becomes live. In many quarters its tuition is and has been grossly misrepresented by the 'physical response syndrome'. This misrepresentation is often being taught by people whose only experience of violent conflict has patently been in the arena of their own safe imagination where hypothesis wins the day. They write, evidently, from a perspective of never having been there themselves and garnish unreal scenarios with unworkable physical techniques.'

Peter Consterdine - British Combat Association

Most people are not mentally or physically equipped to handle a violent confrontation. The immediate response for the majority being that of terror and capitulation. For this reason self protection should deal with the possibility of 'flight' over 'fight'. Where flight is not an option, awareness of attack ritual should be used by the potential victim to prime and pre-emptively attack the attacker.

If you have to become physical you should be pre-emptive and not defensive. Of course, once you have been attacked pre-emptiveness is no longer an option and most of the techniques that are the perfunctory by-products of most defence books are as unworkable as they are unrealistic. If you are not already incapacitated you will be fighting, tooth and nail, for your life. This is where the support system, to be detailed in a later chapter, comes into its own.

Awareness allows a pre-emptive response, (avoidance, escape or attack) the victim recognising menace before the 'monster metamorphosis', this allowing him/her to deal with it before it deals with them.

The majority of contemporary street encounters are not blind side ambushes - though these still have to be addressed - neither are they match fights - though these have to be taken into account also - rather they are attacks preceded by ritualistic, though often innate, priming entrapments.

Everyone, it would appear, addresses the physical response - and each school of thought, of which there are many, seems to contradict the other - but what about those vital seconds before combat, pre-fight ritual, the build up that often dictates the outcome of the fight? Though often subconsciously the attacker uses priming techniques that allow him to take his intended victim out of the game before they even know that they are in it, recognising these ritualistic movements allows you to read the attacker's play - control him and, if he persists in his attempted assault, take him off the planet. There is an old proverb that says if you want to go in to the woods and hunt the tiger you first must learn everything there is to know about the tiger, his weaknesses and his strengths, his pre-attack body language, where he sleeps, eats, his likes and dislikes, his reactions to certain stimuli. You need to know your enemy inside out - otherwise you are not hunting the tiger, you are simply taking a walk in the woods.

What do you know about the enemy?

Knowledge is power - to make our techniques work against today's enemy we need empirical background on him, we need to study his weaknesses and strengths, his rituals - the body language and street speak he uses prior to attack. If you don't understand the enemy then you are fighting blindfold.

If you talk to a game hunter he will be able to tell you what every movement of his prey means and how the animal is likely to react to different stimuli, he will also tell you the exact movements his prey will make before it attacks, this being exactly the right to shoot. The game hunter knows his enemy as well as he knows himself and it is not the weapon he carries in his hand that makes him superior rather his vast knowledge of the animal's attack ritual.

A nightclub doorman, a good one, is a master of body language and enemy ritual. He can spot a fight seconds, minutes even hours before it starts simply by studying the customers in his club.

The monster walking back and forward on the edge of the dance floor, stalking his intended prey (the guy dancing with his girlfriend, the lad who accidentally bumped into him and spilled his drink, etc), his back heaving as he breathes deeply to control adrenalin, his arms splaying as though he's carrying buckets of water, tunnel vision - he doesn't take his eye off his prey - the verbal abuse 'wanker, wanker, arsehole'.

He is building up to an attack, but when he reaches the crescendo and is just about to strike - that's when he is most vulnerable to attack himself.

Sun Tzu said it far more eloquently that I ever could:

"Know the enemy and know yourself;
One hundred challenges without danger;
Know the enemy and know not yourself;
One triumph for one defeat;
Know not the enemy and know not yourself"
Every challenge is certain peril."

The ritual of violence

Most attacks are preceded by stalking and dialogue entrapments.

One area often overlooked is the innate ritual employed by attackers. One aspect of this being the four D's - dialogue-deception-distraction-destruction - this involving body language as well as the spoken word. This dialogue is often called 'The interview'.

If you can spot the ritual, you can stop the crime.

Street speak

The language of the street also needs deciphering, much of the attacker's dialogue is used as an innate trigger for violence. Positive interpretation will unveil signs of imminent attack.

The ritual alters according to the category of attack, as does the dialogue. The genre of attack can vary from gratuitous assault to serial rape/murder.

If the intent is robbery or rape or the attacker is a seasoned one, the dialogue is usually disarming or incidental, 'Have you got a light please?' Or 'Haven't we met somewhere before?' The attacker looking to 'switch the victim off' before attack.

In the case of the gratuitous assault where the intent is 'attack for attack's sake' the dialogue will probably be aggressive, 'What are you looking at?' In either case, dialogue is employed to gain and distract attention before attack.

Generally speaking, the greater the crime, the greater the deception.

At the bottom end of the scale the gratuitous attacker will engage his intended victim with aggressive dialogue, ('I'm gonna batter you, you bastard!'). At the top of the scale the rapist/murderer will prime his victim with anything from a gentlemanly request for directions to, as in the case of killer John Cannan, sending his intended victims (usually women he had spotted in the street and followed, or just met) champagne, flowers and a dinner invitation, that were the

ultimate primers for rape and murder. The elite attackers dropping in to the thespian role with Oscar winning perfection.

The street fighter

In the case of an experienced street fighter he will often tell his intended victim that he does not want to fight - then attack them immediately and ferociously, usually finishing the fight with the same attack. If he says that he does not want to fight and then moves away he is probably telling the truth and is not such a threat. If, however, he moves forward and tries to make body contact as he tells you 'I don't want any trouble!' then he is usually a liar and is using the deception to prime you for attack.

I have a friend in Coventry, who shall remain nameless, who always told his opponents that he did not want to fight before knocking them out. Invariably they would come around, some moments later, rubbing their chin and saying 'I'm sure he said he didn't want to fight!'

Cheap shot? Dirty trick? Cowardly move? No, not at all and if you think it is any, or all three, of the former then wake up and smell the roses. I understand where you're coming from, I used to be the same, with the enemy of this generation. Forget it - he is brutal and shameless and to give him honour when he will only use it against you is fool hardy. You need an edge, you may be facing two or three and if they beat you it will be brutal - you can't afford to lose - so use what ever you can to survive the encounter. And if you think that it is below you then look at the Samurai of old: they used many such tricks and mass deception to defeat a dangerous enemy, everything from feigning cowardice, pre-fight, to disarm an enemy before attacking themselves, to feigning injury, in-fight, to draw an opponent in for the kill and thus generate an opening in his defence, to brutally hacking him to pieces, post fight, as a propaganda exercise to frighten off other potential enemies. Morality in real

violence will do nothing but blunt your tools, so reserve this very worthy attribute for those in society, and in your own life, that deserve it.

Gratuitous assault

This mindless fashion of violence often starts with as little as eye contact; this in a volatile habitat being construed as a subliminal 'challenge to fight'. Many of the fights I witnessed in my time as a nightclub doorman began with the 'eye contact challenge'.

You don't have to do anything wrong to be attacked by the by people of this ilk, you just have to be there. Being aware of surroundings and attack ritual will allow you to detect and subsequently avoid these incidents in the primary stages.

In the bar or on the street you can easily spot the gratuitous attacker. He'll have a bad attitude, probably propping up the bar or stalking the dance floor, his elbows pushed out from his sides as though carrying buckets of water. He'll have the customary curled upper lip and will probably be very rude to anyone that moves within a few feet of him. If he's walking down the street he'll do so with an over confident/arrogant bounce, if he's with others he'll probably be very loud, garrulous and erratic in his movements. Again, as in the night club, he'll be stalking, looking for eye contact. If you are aware you can spot these signs a mile off. There are two kinds of eye contact that may escalate in to violence.

The cursory glance

Who accidentally catches your eye, or you his, the glance becoming a stare, and progressing to a verbal exchange, this the pre-cursor to violence.

Often, when it becomes obvious that you do not know each other, the ego clicks in and goes to work. The initial cursory eye contact develops into a fully fledged staring contest. The eyes, being

a sensitive organ, cannot hold a stare for too long without the occurrence of soreness, watering or blinking. Not wanting to blink first, this possibly being construed as a 'back down', the one with the sorest eyes throws a verbal challenge ('You ****ing looking at me?') to hide the fact that he needs to blink. If the verbal challenge is returned ('Yea, I am looking at you. What you gonna do about it?') then the fight, after a few more formalities, is probably on.

'The eye contact challenger'

This is the man who is looking for a fight, the first person to hold eye contact with him will become his victim, his aggression is usually displaced but, nevertheless, tangibly ferocious.

These are his ritualistic steps

1) EYE CONTACT

You may catch the eye of someone across a crowded room or a street, the look lingers.

2) THE QUESTION

"Who are you looking at? Want a ****ing picture?"

3) THE APPROACH

A physical approach follows.

4) QUESTION REITERATION

"I said, do you want a ****ING picture?" The reiteration, with added vehemence.

5) ACTUAL CHALLENGE

"Do you wanna 'go', then?"

6) SINGLE SYLLABLE CHALLENGE

Often the assailant may attack at 'actual challenge'. If he doesn't, and as a pre-cursor to violence, he will often drop in to single syllables that act as subliminal action triggers to his attack. Words like 'Yeah', 'And' or 'So', are often employed just before attack. The single syllable is a sure sign that the interview is nearing an end and the introduction of physical is imminent.

Running concurrently will be signs of 'adrenal reaction', displayed by the challenger.

Arm splaying

The attacker's arms will splay in a fit of exclamation.

The finger's come-on

He will often beckon his victim on with his finger.

Head nodding

The assailant may sporadically nod his head.

Neck Pecking

He will peck his neck like a cockerel usually in conjunction with his single syllable challenge.

Eye bulge

Due to the tunnel vision that accompanies adrenalin the attacker's eyes may appear wide and staring.

Stancing up

He will take up an innate fighting stance.

Distance close-down

With every passing second of the altercation the attacker will

advance closer to his victim, his movements and tone becoming more erratic and aggressive the closer he gets to actual attack.

It is worth mentioning that the forgoing is the complete ritual. Occasionally, depending upon the victim's response and awareness and the attacker's temperament, the attacker may attack without warning at any stage or jump steps, for instance from the question to the actual challenge, so an early exit is always advisable.

The earlier you can spot the ritual the more chance you have of being pre-emptive in avoidance escape or attack.

Ideally you should avoid eye contact, or break it if it is already engaged, as soon as you sense menace. If a verbal challenge is made, do not return it - the verbal will be thrown as a subliminal challenge and a reply will usually be seen as an acceptance of that challenge. If an approach is made put up your fence (detailed later).

The disarming approach
The mugger/rapist/seasoned fighter

The professional attacks for profit and covets compliance. He does not want to fight. To make his job easier he employs guile as opposed to force, this coming via deception. As with all predators, he seeks people in a victim state. He is, most often, very different from the archetypal, celluloid attacker that we have been programmed to expect.

I think this is best described By Christopher Berry-Dee and Robin Odell in their true crime book 'Lady Killer'. I quote,

"Such predators are difficult to detect because their behaviour is masked with protective cunning. They merge into society and appear to all intents and purposes normal and well adjusted."

This is the case with the most disarming of predators. They rarely look like potential attackers. The archetypal stocking faced robber with a cosh and a swag bag is far removed from the real world villain who is more likely to be dressed in a Boss smart suit and an Italian tie.

The opportunities they seek are those formerly described. Often the attacker may not even be looking, but if an opportunity falls into their lap, they will act.

Again, intentions vary. The muggers I have interviewed intended to rob, the rapists intended to rape, often killing their victims as an afterthought, or by mistake. The killers sometimes intended to kill, other times they too killed by accident. The more serious the crime and experienced the criminal the more deceptive the priming, the attackers adopting a cunning veil to beguile their intended victims.

I shall deal with them individually, still bearing in mind that they all use deception in varying degrees.

Note: If you do not employ awareness, deception often becomes an unnecessary tool for the attacker, the 'blind side/ambush attack' prevailing. In this instance the first the victim knows of the incursion is the physical attack itself, by then it is often too late.

As with most attacks the mugger follows a ritual. Understanding this is the pre-requisite to threat avoidance.

The Mugger

"There was this geezer and his Mrs, outside a telephone box. Their car had the bonnet up, the woman went in to the phone box. We walked up to the phone box and pretended to queue for the phone. The geezer looked like he had money, good clothes, smart car. I gave J. the signal by winking at him, I then asked the geezer the

time and we both pulled out our knives. When he looked up we told him to hand over his wallet."

Mugger interview

These are his ritualistic steps.

1) VICTIM SELECTION

"Choosing a victim isn't hard. People are just asking to be robbed. I came out of Pizza Hut the other night, about 10.30pm, there was this girl walking down the side of the dual carriageway, on her own. She must have only been, what, 17, at the very most. She might as well have had a sign across her chest saying, 'attack me!' Then they moan when someone does attack them. And the lads are as bad. They haven't got a ****ing clue. We used to thumb a lift from town, after the nightclub. Some ****ing idiot would pick us up, three of us, then wonder what he'd done wrong when we mugged 'im for all 'e's got. I reckon 'alf the ****ers aren't all there. I mean, don't they read the papers? Don't they know 'ow we (muggers) work?"

Case histories

The ideal victim is in code white (switched off), mentally and/or environmentally, those daydreaming or detached from the herd.

Selection often occurs in sparsely populated locations, the mugger wanting as little fuss as possible in the execution of his attack. He favours the quiet park/street/entry etc. This does not mean that people are safe in highly populated areas like shopping malls, busy streets etc. Very often the mugger stalks such places for victims, after selection following them to a safe attack zone like the car park of a mall.

There are of course different kinds of mugger. Some will see an opportunity and snatch and run, others will stalk and prime, others still are opportunists who will only attack if a safe opportunity falls

into their lap. Awareness will allow you to spot these malevolents and avoid attack.

2) VICTIM STALKING

"Once we've chosen a victim we follow them, cross the road, walk past them maybe two or three times. We wait for them to walk into a side street or park, anywhere quiet. Some of them must be thick not to notice what's going on."

Case histories

A stalking of the chosen victim, for priming, and awareness assessment, will occur. If necessary the victim will be followed in the hope that he/she will heighten vulnerability mentally/ environmentally by walking into a park/down a quiet street/entry etc. If the victim is followed from a shopping mall the attacker often waits for him/her to put the shopping in the boot of the car or even strike as he/she enters the car. It is at such times that even vigilant people drop their guard, and though it may only be for a second that is all the attacker needs.

3) EXPLORATORY APPROACH

"We walk up to them and ask the time, this distracts them. If they look like they know what we're gonna do, or if they look a bit tough or answer with a rough voice, when we ask them the time, then we just walk off.

Case histories

This will often be coupled with disarming dialogue, (the four D's) used to prime the victim for attack. It is also used as a secondary awareness assessment.

If at this point, or at any point after victim stalking, the victim appears switched off, the mugger may initiate his attack/threatened attack with out any further priming.

4) ASSESSMENT

a) NEGATIVE ASSESSMENT

If the mugger feels that the chosen victim is switched on to the attempt and his secondary assessment is negative, he will often abort.

b) POSITIVE ASSESSMENT

"...this distracts them (asking the time) while we pull out our knives. When they look up we say, 'Give us your ****ing money!' They usually look blank. Both of us shout at them, 'Get your ****ing wallet out', and put the knives closer to their face."

Case histories

If the mugger feels that the chosen victim is switched off he may initiate the attack/threatened attack whilst the victim is engaged in answering his disarming question (this may be anything from asking directions to asking the time).

5) THREATENED ATTACK

"...This was taking too long (the mugging) I thought to myself. I said, 'I'm going to give you to the count of three [to hand over his wallet], or else', and pushed the knife closer to his throat. He handed over his wallet and we ran off. If he'd refused to give us the wallet by three, we'd have just run away."

Case histories

The mugger will often threaten the victims with attack to frighten them into supplication, frequently underlining the threat with a weapon or an accomplice, or both.

The threat will be aggressive and menacing, this effecting adrenal dump in the victim, quickly escalating to the freeze syndrome (the reasoning process mistakes adrenalin for fear, often freezing victims into immobility). The threats are repeated with escalating aggression causing the victim to experience multiple adrenal release, grossly heightening the supposed feeling of fear and adding to the 'freeze'. The threats of course are married with demands for money/credit cards etc.

The false promise

Often the mugger threatens to hurt the victim if they are not compliant, or *not* to hurt the victim in exchange for compliance. The promise cannot be relied on.

6) ACTUAL ATTACK

"Sometimes, if they're a bit brave I'll give them a dig, (hit them) then they're mine. I've 'ad blokes who really look like they're gonna go for it, you give them a bit of pain and the fight falls out of them. They become just like babies."

Case histories

The mugger may use a physical attack, creating compliance via disablement.

Some muggers will initiate an attack to disable the victim, before stealing his/her belongings.

Sometimes the attack will be minimal, used only to add to 'freeze', other times the attack will be frenzied and severe. Any chance of a physical defence, other than actually attacking back with the same degree (or greater) of ferocity, is unlikely to be effective. The concepts of 'blocking' an assailant's blows or using hypothesised 'release' techniques are not sound. If the situation has got this far only the very strong will survive.

Body language

Most attackers will display the following body language in the course of their ritual.

1) Erratic eye movement

The attacker or his accomplice, concerned about being caught mid act, will constantly be checking for police/general public involvement.

2) Adrenal reaction

Unless the attacker is seasoned he will be showing signs of adrenalin. Pre-attack, his face will appear pale, his eyes wide from adrenalin-induced tunnel vision. He will be stern and unsmiling, he may also fidget in an attempt to hide 'adrenal shake' (the body will 'shiver' as though cold) and his voice may have a nervous quiver.

3) Hand concealment

Pre-attack, if the attacker is carrying a weapon, the bearing hand may be hidden, either in his pocket or behind his back. If one or both of his hands is concealed, beware. Some attackers do not hide the hands, rather they turn the palm or palms away from the chosen victim on approach to conceal a weapon, or keep the offending hand close to their leg to conceal the same. Other attackers will keep their hands on full display, extracting a weapon from its hiding place as they approach, or immediately after asking an engaging question.

If the approach is by more than one person they will all usually display the same physical traits.

Pincer movement

If more than one assailant is involved it is usual for one of the attackers to deploy the victim with a distracting question whilst the

other/s move to your off side, whilst the victim is distracted by the questioner, his accomplice/s attack.

Tell-tale signs

Awareness allows you to spot the tell-tale signs that the mugger emits in his selection stage.

Close observation will highlight the assailant's suspicious actions, he will stand out like a sore thumb. His eyes will follow the victim closely and dart away if the look is returned, he will have a false casualness about him, as though trying to look occupied, but with no occupying matter. The fact that he has noticed his intended victim's vigilance will, at this stage, usually be enough to cause early abortion of the intended attack. Awareness deems the victim a hard target. The victim should let the attacker know, by his/her actions, that he has been noted. If the victim mingles with other people, goes in to a shop, makes a hasty retreat etc. the attacker will move on, going back into selection mode and looking for another victim, preferably someone that is not so aware.

So remember, the attacker is not a compliant training partner in the dojo who will go with the flow; your attacker will be aggressive, uncompliant and ***ing frightening. But this hard shell usually conceals a coward, and once you have cracked the shell and got past his front the attacker usually goes from 'hard to lard'.

Chapter Three
Muscle memory

Did you ever hear the story about the circus knife thrower that tried to kill his wife but every tine he threw a knife at her he missed? He had trained so hard and for so long to just miss her that when he actually wanted to hit her he couldn't - his muscle memory was tuned into missing the target.

I was sat at the Shotokan Midlands championships a few years ago watching fine displays of competition fighting by some of the top point scorers in the country. One of the fighters, G, a member of the then Midland squad and an excellent competition fighter with some twenty years karate experience behind him (he was a 3rd dan at the time) approached me in the stands. He looked rather perturbed and asked whether I could give him a little advice.

It turned out that this guy had, several weeks before, been involved in a fracas outside a local night club. He'd had a good night out with his brother and a friend and had just left the club to get some chips, as you do, and make his way home. Crossing the road he caught the eye of two aggressive young lads on the other side of the street. Both were about twenty years old.

'What are you ****ing looking at?' the lad shouted across to G.

Because the question was unsolicited and completely unexpected G didn't really know what to say, so he hesitated. Before he knew it the lad had crossed the road with his mate and was reiterating the challenge,

'D'you ****ing want some then, do ya, ****ing do ya?'

His brother and his mate tried to pull G away telling him not to get involved and that it wasn't worth it. G still had not spoken because he just didn't know how to reply. Basically he was gobsmacked, the challenge had come completely out of the blue.

As he said to me in the stands, 'If I'd had trouble with the guy earlier on I'd have known what to expect, but I hadn't, this guy wanted to fight with me for no reason. I just couldn't understand it.'

Unfortunately this is the way with many attacks today. G was searching for logic - there was none.

The lad got more and more aggressive, his mate hovered menacingly in the background as back up, until he was almost in G's face. Instinctively G threw a punch at the guy, pre-emptively, and landed what would have been a perfect knock-out blow on his aggressor's jaw had he not pulled the punch on impact with perfect competition winning control. His brother pulled him away and again told him to 'leave it'.

As they turned to walk away G felt a heavy blow to the back of his head followed by a few more. His brother and their mate suffered the same fate - within seconds all three had been beaten to the floor and given a good kicking whilst down.

G never slept for a week and, as he spoke to me, several weeks after the incident it was obvious that he was still beating himself up over the matter.

Why hadn't he performed? Why did he pull his punch? Why was he so scared? He'd spent all his adult life and much of his young life training in a fighting art and on his first real encounter it had let him down.

The bumps and bruises didn't bother him that much, it was the fact that he felt so ineffectual in the encounter that really stung, and their attackers were nobodies - hadn't trained a day in their lives. G seemed to me as though he was on the verge of abandoning his art because of the debacle.

What went wrong? What should he do?

Firstly I told him not to abandon his art. The art he practised, Shotokan, was a good art - a hard style. What he did need to do was change the way he trained.

You get what you train for. If you train for control and practice thousands of pulled punches day in and day out then when you are attacked and spontaneity takes the reins in a real fight, pulled punches are what you'll most likely get. It's called muscle memory. When you repetitively train a technique it will become a reaction, what we call automatism. You will automatically do what your body is trained to do, and if that training is to pull punches on impact with the target then that's what you'll do in a real situation.

I remember many years ago at a big international semi-contact in France meeting when things got out of hand and tempers started to fray, the whole contest arena exploded and everyone started fighting for real - and there was some of the best fighters on the planet at this contest - but, amazingly, not a single injury was incurred. This was not because the fighters were incapable - they were brilliant - it was because muscle memory pumped out what they had all trained so diligently for, they had trained to pull blows and that's exactly what they did. The guy who reported the incident in a big martial arts magazine could not understand why, considering the fact that these were the best karataka in the world, the techniques, when used for real, did not work. He put it down to the fact that 'Karate is obviously not all it is made out to be!'

In actual fact it was not karate that was ineffectual rather the training methods. These guys, like the circus knife thrower, were trained to miss and not hit, and that's exactly what they did.

Muscle memory is a good thing if you train it correctly. If you want it to feed out full contact blows in a real scenario then full contact blows is what you must train for. This is one of the reasons why training in semi-contact and full contact at the same time is not always a good thing. The first punch I ever threw on the door

was pulled on impact and did nothing but cut my opponent's lip. I thought it was because I didn't have any power in my technique, but when I realised that it was negative muscle memory I changed all my training to full contact. Subsequently I was knocking people out in real fights but getting disqualified from every tournament I entered. People thought that I was dropping my contest opponents deliberately, but I wasn't, it was muscle memory.

Muscle memory also affects your reactions to capitulation. If you stop in the dojo when you get a bloody lip or when you're tired or nauseous or scared, if you give in too easily in the controlled arena that's exactly what you should expect to do in a real situation. So in the controlled arena you must treat it as though it were for real. If you stop in a real fight because of a misdemeanour then you'll be waking up with a crowd around you - of this there is no doubt.

Muscle memory can be over-ridden in certain circumstances. When you use a sniper option, which is response as opposed to reaction, you can actually monitor the amount of control (or lack thereof) that you wish to use but, once that first shot has been taken and spontaneity takes over, muscle memory is the order of the day.

If you do mix your training, a bit of semi and a bit of full, muscle memory tends to go with the majority, that is it will favour whichever you train the most.

If it is reality that you favour, and I presume that it is otherwise you would not be reading this book, then stick to as much full contact, pad work, bag work, heavy sparring etc, as you can.

Compliance

In many of the systems around today compliance rules the roost. This is a bad thing for several reasons.

Compliance is good when you are learning a new technique. If there is not a bit of compliance on the side of your partner it becomes very difficult to improve, but it should be used as little as possible and not all the time. Otherwise you will build a false sense of security and confidence that will get you bashed in a real situation.

Use compliance to develop good technique and then throw it away and practice without it, especially in grappling work. Whilst a compliant partner helps you to develop technique, an un-compliant partner will help you develop manipulative strength, stamina, endurance, true confidence and an enlightenment of what works and what does not. The latter is something that cannot be found without pressure testing one's wares. When you make a technique work against someone that is wholly determined to stop you then you know that technique is of some worth.

I guarantee that if a war started tomorrow and martial artists from different systems had to make their art work in life and death situations all the shit would drop, no one would be practising superfluous technique and everyone would be looking to reinstate the illegal techniques (the ones that really did and do work) that have long since been exiled from contemporary martial art because they were not commercially/socially/Olympically acceptable in a civilised?! society. When you know that it has got to work or you die you don't **ck about trying to make it look good. And you certainly wouldn't be practising decidedly 'iffy' technique. You'd end up, like I did, with a small but proven main artillery that you are absolutely sure of, and a massive support system to back those techniques up.

Many of the wonderful systems (I shall name none because I do not wish to offend) that originated as 'real' arts have met this decline and will only realise it when they fail the acid test of workability.

So I ask you, do you pressure test? How will your system fare when the rug of compliance is pulled from under your feet?

Please don't anyone be offended by this, I mean no disrespect and if you are offended you have my unreserved apology, but if you want reality then honesty - often it is self honesty - is the first step.

This is not about style or system. I have seen none that would not work though I have seen many that are practised in a way that would make them fail.

If you are in a club where you do not feel fear and where pressure is not injected on a regular basis then maybe you should be looking to change clubs.

Another bad thing about too much compliance is that it teaches you to be beaten. You actually learn to let your opponent put a move or a technique on you, often placing yourself in the right position when he has got it wrong - in a sense you learn to lose which can't be a good thing.

I spar with my brother-in-law most days - I have done for many years. I also use him in my club to demonstrate techniques that I am teaching. He had been a compliant demo partner for so long that when we actually got the gloves on and went for it I found myself completely dominating him - he fell for every move that I tried. I realised that, because he had spent so much time being my compliant demo partner he had developed negative muscle memory and was getting beaten more than the proverbial egg. I told him what I thought and stopped using him for all the demo work - within weeks he was giving me the fight of my life (I'm not sure that I should have told him now) because he had erased and overrode his negative muscle memory.

Naked aggression

From my ten years experience of working the doors and my twenty five years in the martial arts I have noticed and noted many things. One of the most prominent and surprising is how people react

when faced with naked aggression - it freaks them out. I've seen many fighters, some of them excellent people, bottle out when faced with an aggressive adversary even though aggression is often all that the assailant has, like a big gun with no bullets. It's menacing because you don't know that it has no bullets but harmless because of the same fact.

What naked aggression does to the recipient is signal to their brain extreme danger. Aggression is seen as synonymous with threat, the brain then sends a signal to the adrenal gland and fight or flight is put into operation. Because the brain senses extreme and imminent danger as opposed to anticipatory danger it activates a big release of adrenalin, adrenal dump, that hits the system at about a hundred miles an hour. To create this pool of extra blood needed to feed all the major muscles for fight or flight some blood is drawn away from all the non necessary areas (those seen as non necessary for fight or flight) of the body. One of these non necessary areas is the brain, and the lack of blood in the head is what causes tunnel vision, time distortion, memory loss and memory distortion, dry mouth etc.

The body also tries to off load any excess baggage, things that are not deemed needy for fight or flight. This is why we feel the urge to empty our bowels and bladder (some people actually do) or have the feeling of nausea. Of course in the twenty-first century it is not socially acceptable to empty one's bowels in public so we have learned to tighten the buttocks and control the urge.

To most, all of these reactions that we associate with being scared (look he scared, he's shaking like a leaf - he's shitting himself) are unfamiliar and so the reasoning process mistakes them for sheer terror. The panic acts as a negative body accelerator and we bottle out.

And this whole process was caused simply by aggressive stimuli that more often than not cannot be backed up.

Aggression therapy

As with most things the more exposure one gets to something and the more one understands about it the less frightening it becomes. So practice in the dojo shouting at each other, swearing and being extremely aggressive (be careful not to have children in the class when practising this exercise).

Even though it is in the controlled arena and only an exercise, the sub-conscious mind, working independently of the conscious mind, will still register trauma and release adrenalin. Whilst your opponent is shouting obscenities, you practice controlling the flow and the urge to panic. Basically you become, through constant exposure to aggression, desensitised to it (this is demonstrated on my DVD Three Second Fighter).

Of course aggression is a two way street and what can be used against us can be used by us against our attackers. Aggression can be used as a tool to instil the same adrenal dump in our assailants as they instil in us. They too, ignorant to their own bodily reactions, will often mistake adrenalin for fear and bottle out.

This is why the Kiaa points are in kata, so that we can practice switching aggression on and off like a tap. It needs practice: it is not easy to just let our aggression go at the drop of a hat. Most of us have been indoctrinated since childhood to suppress aggression and in the dojo

naked aggression, displayed independently of technique, is seen as bad temper - bad control and subsequently bad etiquette, and swearing in the dojo - sacrilege. But this is a part of the modern attacker's armoury and should be a part of ours.

Learning to let your aggression out is also wonderfully therapeutic - a great way of burning up the un-utilised adrenalin left over from the intangible confrontations of twenty-first century situations like having to stand up to a belligerent boss, a dominant spouse or a noisy neighbour - confrontations where adrenalin is released but not utilised because neither fight or flight was/is an option.

People think nothing of going to the toilet every day to get rid of their physical waste but what about the psychological waste collated through so many intangible confrontations, that has to be de-sludged also?

Aggression therapy is an excellent way of exorcising the demons and de-sludging the psyche. With a bit of visualisation your training partner can become your ex-wife (though probably a lot better looking) who is still trying to dominate you even though you've been divorced 5 years, your bullying boss, noisy neighbour, your life, the whole world. Use them to tap your aggression and get it out, use it as a fuel, as an attacking implement, a psychological bullet. In my time I've beaten more opponents with aggression alone that I have with any physical attack.

With aggression therapy you can let the lot go. It helps you to mentally de-sludge and fine tune a brilliant psychological weapon, and it also helps your partner to learn control against naked aggression.

To reiterate, you get what you train for, so train for realism and that is what you get, train for compliance and all you will get is loss after loss. If you are comfortable change partners, clubs or even

associations until you are uncomfortable. If you stay in a comfort zone for too long the peripheral shell will get so hardened that you won't be able to break free - which means you stop improving.

Chapter Four
The game plan (GP)

"The fox and the cat were standing on a hill, talking about how many ways they knew of escaping from a pack of dogs. The cat, feeling rather inadequate, said, 'I only know one way. I run up the nearest tree'. The fox gave the cat a sardonic smile and said, 'Well, actually, I know fifty different ways of escaping a pack of dogs.' As they spoke a pack of dogs appeared on the horizon and ran in the direction of the fox and the cat. The cat, utilising his only escape technique, found sanctuary up a nearby tree.

Whilst the fox was busy deciding which of the fifty escape techniques he should employ, he got eaten by the pack of dogs."

Some of the techniques and methods of practice in this chapter on main artillery may seem a little basic for the advanced or practising martial artist who might see 'complex' as being synonymous with effective. In real terms 'complex' is synonymous only with impractical. To be effective the chosen GP for a self defence technique must be economical and what is economical if it is not 'basic'? Paradoxically, the beginner will find no problem in practising the prescribed concepts because of their fundamental qualities and the fact that they have not been indoctrinated with negative concepts. Their cup is empty, as the Buddhist monks might say.

Game plan

"Thus, those that win one hundred triumphs in one hundred conflicts
Do not have supreme skill.
Those who have supreme skill,
Use strategy (game plan) to bend others without coming to conflict.
The ideal strategy, therefore, is to thwart a plan.
The next best is to thwart a negotiation.
The next best is to thwart a strategy.
The inferior politic is to attack a fortified area.
Attacking a fortified area is an art of last resort;
Those skilled in executing a strategy,
Bend the strategy of others without conflict;
Uproot the fortifications of others with out attacking;
Absorb the organisations of others without prolonged operations.
Sun Tzu

The trained fighter

We have a paradox here. In the main, the trained fighter has a huge catalogue of techniques and yet no main artillery, no support system (their whole artillery is at the range that their style dictates and very few styles adequately cover all ranges) and no game plan. He has too many techniques to chose from. When a situation becomes 'live', like the fox, he gets a mental log jam and is often defeated whilst in the process of choosing the right technique to employ.

On the other hand, the novice has 'no artillery', no game plan and absolutely no idea. When a situation becomes 'live' for him he has nothing to choose from and very often comes out of the altercation badly.

One of the philosophies of the famous Gracie family is that it is better to be excellent at one or two techniques than average at many. Rickson Gracie (pronounced Hickson) the world - no holds barred - fighting champion tells the story of a young lad who is being punched in the face by a bigger boy but is too scared to fight back. In a last ditch attempt at stopping the beating the smaller lad, by now crying, grabs hold of the bully's jacket collar with his right hand and his opposite lapel with his left and places a cross choke on the bigger boy. It's the only technique that he knows and within seconds the bully is on his knees and falling unconscious.

Unrestricted by log jam he used the only technique he knew and won a convincing victory.

Form a game plan. How will you react and what technique/s will you employ when confronted by an attacker? Decide, and then mentally and physically rehearse your game plan, over and again.

Spontaneous response

I am often told, by the uninitiated, that one should when facing an aggressor be spontaneous, reacting rather than responding according to the attack. This would mean having to wait until the assailant actually attacks, spontaneously reacting there after. Too Late!!!

Action is faster than reaction, and in the early stages of an altercation response is preferable to reaction because it allows you to control your adversary, maintain a safe range and, if necessary, utilise a sniper option. Reaction is what you get when you are ambushed or you fall in to support system because sniper option did not finish the fight, for whatever reason.

If you allow the assailant to attack first, your chances of defence are minimal.

If you are blindsided or ambushed and the first you know of a situation is the attack itself then, yes, reaction/spontaneity is not

only a sound concept but the only concept you have. But, as I mentioned earlier, unless you are highly trained and pressure tested that reaction will often be a negative one and capitulation or collapse often ensues. If you wait to be attacked you have left it far too late.

If, however you are 'coded up' (using awareness) it will be pretty difficult for an assailant to utilise ambush. His attack then is likely to come from the front, and usually through deceptive dialogue. This allows you to take the initiative and determine the state of play. This is where knowledge of the enemy is imperative, his ritual and physical/verbal pre-cursors to attack allowing you to see exactly when he intends to initiate his attack and, therefore, the right time for you to escape or pre-emptively attack the attacker. His pre-cursory movements will almost give you a countdown to his physical attack.

If you do not know the modern enemy then you are only half prepared and will probably lose as often as you win. (Note: understanding yourself is comprehensively covered in my books *Animal Day* and *Fear - The friend of exceptional people*).

My advice to the novice who has no formal 'fighting' background is to choose his strongest side (right-hand if you are right-handed, left if you are left-handed) and perfect one or two techniques using that side (or whatever side you feel most confident at). Make them, via conscientious practice, your own.

Practice until you develop power and accuracy, then, especially if you employ the technique as a pre-emptive attack, your physical game plan is ready.

My advice to the advanced or practising martial artist is exactly the same: choose your strongest technique and make it stronger, work it until it is absolutely natural and comfortable. This will be your main artillery.

I remember well when Andy Sherry, a senior KUGB fighter and coach, dominated the whole European competition scene with a

Gyakasuki (reverse punch) and people were saying 'Oh yea, Andy Sherry, he's only got a reverse punch!' So what? He beat everyone in Europe with it, and in the end when his opponents looked only for this devastating reverse punch he'd slip in a big Ushuru Geri (back kick).

I have a friend in Coventry called Kev H, a phenomenal KO merchant with his right hook. He won hundreds of fights with his right hand alone, and people said to me 'Oh yea, Kev, he's only got a right hook!' Again I ask, so what? He has, to my knowledge, beaten over five hundred opponents with it. And why? Because it works and he knows it works.

When Mr Sherry fought he would, I'm sure, have used his awareness of contest arena and of the opponent in front of him to make the reverse punch fit and Kev did the same. His acute awareness meant that people found it very hard to ambush him. He was too switched on, so he made the circumstances fit his sniper option.

This of course is not to say that these two worthy fighters had nothing else other than their sniper attack. Both are/were intelligent enough to understand that a comprehensive support system was needed to back their main artillery - just in case - but they felt no obligation to change a winning formula just because the uninitiated thought that their arsenal was limited.

What this allows you to do is sit in your front room at home and know, categorically, what technique you are going to use should you get into a situation when you take your wife/girlfriend etc out to the pictures later in the evening, your awareness allows that. Should your awareness drop and you get ambushed or find yourself in a match fight where sniper option is not an option then your support system comes into its own. Preparing for, and accepting, the latter is also a part of your game plan.

Of course, you should still practice all your other techniques and perhaps add to your main artillery as they improve.

Action triggers

An action trigger is a word or sentence used to 'trigger action'. When facing potential menace it is very often difficult to know how to initiate a physical response. One never quite knows the right time to attack or how to trigger that attack in a mind that does not want to become physical, even though it might be necessary. A key word or sentence will take away the decision making. Your chosen word/sentence will automatically initiate your attack. The trigger word/sentence can be any of your choosing, preferably it should be a submissive question, as opposed to a flat statement. This will serve the multi-purpose of switching off the opponent's adrenalin (submissiveness will intimate that you do not want to fight and switch off his fight or flight), brain engagement and action trigger. Also the submissive question subliminally intimates to your assailant that you wish to elongate conversation, where as shorter sentences, certainly single syllables, send the message that conversation is coming to an end.

Whilst the flat statement, ie, 'I don't want trouble', is submissive and can act as an action trigger it does not adequately engage the brain, because it does not demand an answer, neither does it suggest that you wish to elongate the conversation. So make your trigger a question. It can be any of your choosing, even an abstract question holds the multi-purpose, ie, 'how did the City get on today?' because of the confusion factor, after all, what has the 'City result' got to do with a guy asking for your wallet?

Of course this all works nicely in the context of the four D's, your multi-faceted question being Deception and Distraction before the Decision of fight or flight. If the antagonist proffers a question you may wish your trigger 'blurb' to be in the guise of an answer,

or you may even feign deafness by saying, 'Sorry mate, I didn't hear you. What did you say?'

As long as it engages the brain. For maximum effect, launch your attack straight after the trigger question. You don't have to wait for an answer - ask the question and strike.

To make this more natural, practice your trigger question when hitting the bag or pads. The more natural it seems the more it is likely to engage the opponent. In a way the brain engagement is just a feint using psychology as opposed to physical technique, and it is the same engagement innately used by most attackers. Where a boxer, in the ring, may lead with a jab a street fighter will use dialogue and deception as his leading technique. This is why he is so successful at taking out even highly trained martial artists because he is using guile to prime force.

Support system

The support system should also be included in the game plan, as a back up just in case the main artillery fails or is not an option. Basically your support system is every technique and concept that you have ever learned - and they should each have been pressure tested. This will be enlarged upon in the next chapter.

Your game plan should be firstly to avoid, then, escape, third to use firm verbal dissuasion thirdly to initiate physical confrontation, and lastly to prepare for aftermath so that it does not impede your pre-fight ability.

When the 4th response is initiated you should utilise your main artillery (MA) technique, whatever that might be.

The majority of street attacks start at conversation range, this being punching range, so it would be logical to draw your MA attack from that range. There is little point in having a kick as your sniper option when kicking range is unlikely to occur. In your bid to attain the 'one punch kill' you will be looking to develop accuracy, speed

and power, accuracy rising slightly above the other two necessities, because an accurate attack can be effective with minimal power and speed.

Worse case scenario (pre-post fight fear)

Many people bottle out before a confrontation because they get pre-post fight adrenalin, that is to say they worry about the consequences of their actions: police involvement, come backs etc. before the fight/encounter. So your game plan should also take into account the fact that there may be, and often is, a price to pay after the fact. Many a competent fighter has been destroyed because he has paid too much heed to consequence. I'm not saying that consideration should not be paid the consequence of one's actions: many times I have sat and worried about the possibility of badly hurting an opponent, even killing him, but not when he was in my face up some dark alley or on a nightclub door. That kind of hesitancy could (and has to some) prove fatal and has been the downfall of many an over-considerate person. The time to think about such things is now, not when a situation is imminent.

You have to look at aftermath and all that it contains before engaging in battle, police involvement, injury - to you or your opponent - death threats, house visits, come backs: these are all a part and parcel of defending yourself from life's malevolents, they cannot be separated - oh how I wish they could. The plain fact of the matter is the fighting, the physical side, is the easy part. It is dealing with the contributing factors that complicate matters. So to help you cope and stop pre-post-fight contemplation - as we have already stated when he's in your face it's too late to think about what happens afterwards - you should look at the worse case scenarios and deal with them before the fight. We are working, of course, on the premise that avoidance and escape is not a viable

option or talking distance is running low and verbal dissuasion has not had the desired effect.

If my potential assailant has three bruiser brothers who may come back on me when I tear him a new arse then, before I fight with him I must first accept that I may have to fight them as a consequence. Once I have accepted this into the computation it can no longer be used as a leverage against me.

I faced one such lad who told me that his brothers would give me a visit if I beat him, I told him 'that's OK, I've already fought them all, they know where I am. Tell them to come on down'. A bemused look fell upon his face and then he found himself unexpectedly unconscious. He had beaten so many people with the reputation of his brothers, so many of his opponents had backed down because of his threats that, when I didn't, he didn't know what to do.

Many people use the threat of 'come back' as a way to psyche you out. It often masks the fact that they have not got the ability to 'walk the walk'. If, in your game plan, you have already accepted that there will be consequences then they can no longer be used against you.

A good example of this was the time I took out the leader of an infamous gang in Coventry - I put him in hospital for a week. I heard later through the grapevine that his gang had planned a revenge attack on me for the following weekend. They were going to visit my house and do the dirty deed in front of my family. I thought the idea was pretty bad form and spread the rumour very quickly that I had acquired the addresses of three gang leaders and that, after they had been to 'visit' me, I would visit all three addresses and destroy them in front of their families and that I'd make a point of visiting whilst they were having tea with their mum, 'so' I told them 'I'm ready whenever you are'.

Before I put the lad in hospital my game plan had included heavy come backs, I expected no less from such a notorious gang. I accepted that there would be a price to pay, more often than not people threaten until they are blue in the face but do not act on their threats. Talk is very cheap, but with these people I pretty much knew that there would be come backs.

My double bluff worked because although there were a couple of hundred people in this gang each one of them wondered whether it was their name and address that I had acquired so decided to give me a wide berth.

Police involvement is the same. Before an altercation I always accept that there may be involvement - even prison - post fight because the law in this country does not protect the people. So I deal with it beforehand, partly by accepting that they will come - if they, or anyone else, do not then that's a bonus - and partly by acquiring as a part of my game plan a good knowledge of the law and my rights to self defence within it and how to quote the law in my defence should I need to. As I have said before, people are often convicted for what they say and not what they do.

So before you act do your ram-uiy, exorcise the demons of aftermath from your mind by accepting the fact that, whatever the consequence, you'll handle it, then it is all down to your ability and the ability of the guy in front of you.

Chapter Five
Support system

The support system incorporates reaction as opposed to response; reaction being an unconscious act and response being a conscious act.

When someone walks towards you menacingly and you line him up you are responding, you consciously accept that he may be a threat and you respond to that threat by 'putting a fence around your factory' (to be detailed later). If he ambushes you then you react unconsciously, according to how well trained you are.

As I said earlier, if you are trained for reality, blood snot and all, then your reaction will usually be a good one. If, however, you have never trained for reality and you stop at the hurdle of pain, exhaustion, fear, blood etc then the chances are you will become a cowering heap of jelly.

So the support system should involve realistic training for the ambush, the match fight and what my friend and Sempai Dave Turton would call the 'what if syndrome'. What if this happens? What if that happens? What if you're wearing cumbersome clothes? What if your attacker is wearing a crash helmet? What if you get attacked in a swimming pool? What if you're sat behind a table in a pub? Stood on a slippery floor? etc. The list of possibilities can go on and on.

The 'what if syndrome' is an easy one to solve. Devise the most awkward situations that you can think of, recreate them in the dojo (the swimming pool may be a hard one) - or even on the street etc. and practice fighting, in those conditions, ambushes, match fights, line-ups etc.

We did a similar experiment at our club (this was one of Dave's ideas). Now, everyone at my club is used to fighting all out and at

every range - but always in training clothes, so on this particular occasion I made everyone fight wearing wellington boots, very heavy clothing, tight cagoules or anoraks, gloves, basically I dressed them for a winter's day. To add to this we gave one person a couple of heavy shopping bags to carry - then told them to fight to KO or submission. What a difference it made! People were being choked out or smothered with their own cagoules, others were using the shopping bags as a weapon, others still were tripping up in the heavy wellingtons - and losing the fight as a consequence. Then we'd make them fight from a seated position or make them fight from a negative position (with their opponent already holding them in a head lock or pin etc).

Every variation was covered and all the fighting was to submission or KO. This kind of training develops the right reactions - that is to fight back ferociously as opposed to capitulating, and to adapt technique according to environment and clothing.

Circle training

Circle training is an excellent way in which to develop positive reaction to ambush attacks - not forgetting that the best reaction where possible is to avoid and escape - though it does need to be supported by a good repertoire of tested technique. It is not and cannot be 100% real because one actually does know that an attack is imminent, even though you may not know from whom or where.

The trainees/pupils form a circle on the mat. A volunteer steps into the middle (I always ask for, and encourage, volunteers so that the student is making the decision to step into adversity - after all I will not be there to push him in when it kicks off in the street). The volunteer is attacked intermittently by any one of the other students in the circle, at any time and with any technique - no control is used though bag/boxing gloves should be used to add minimal safety.

Sometimes I will restrict the attacks - rugger tackle/ right hook etc - or a certain range - kicking/grappling etc. Once the attack has been launched both combatants fight to a conclusion - KO/ submission etc. The person in the centre usually stays for two or three attacks and is then replaced by another volunteer.

With constant exposure to circle training you develop not only positive reaction but also workable technique because you are fighting against an attacker who has only one objective - to beat you. So if and when you beat him you know it is because the technique you used was a good one and not because your opponent let you win. You will also learn how to deal with the adrenal syndrome and a degree of pain - all necessary attributes in a real situation.

Match fighting

Match fighting is also an easy thing to prepare for - though it takes bottle in bags full to engage in match fighting - it is what most people do in the gym every training session, they spar. The only difference with true match fighting is that the sparring will not be at a designated range, rather it will be at any range that happens. Animal day is an excellent way of preparing for the match fight because there are very few rules and any range is permissible - also the fight is not over until one man gives in or is KO'd.

Animal day is good for many things, not least for showing you who you are and what you have got, but it is especially good for match fight preparation.

I think it is worth mentioning that match fighting is only a very small percentage of real fighting. The majority lies with line up fighting (three second fighting), though when/if a fight goes beyond three seconds a match fight is what it usually becomes - that's why it is a good idea to prepare for it, just in case. It is also important to

mention the fact that, whether you agree or not, most fights that go beyond three seconds tend to end up on the floor so it is imperative that you learn to grapple for this eventuality.

Many practitioners that I have spoken to believe that their system is so good vertical that they do not need to prepare for horizontal. It's rather like someone saying that they are such good drivers that they do not need insurance or a seat belt because they are not going to crash. Generally when people say this it means one thing - they have no, or limited, experience of real fighting.

I had a European kickboxing champion come to my club to spar for an up and coming fight in Russia. He was a very capable lad and by the way he held himself I could tell that he was also very confident in his ability. Because we allow any range in the sparring at my club I thought it only right to give him fair warning,

'We allow any range at this club', I told him. 'How's your grappling?'

'Not very good' he said, honestly, 'but it don't matter, it ain't gonna get that far!'

He preceded to spar with my people and was on the floor more than the cleaner's mop. They could see that he was a good puncher and kicker so they immediately took him to his weakest range - on the ground.

I don't think people fully appreciate just how quickly situations can erupt in the real world and how fast a committed assailant will bridge the gap and be in your face.

People often talk about using a 'stop hit' - catching an opponent as he moves into attack - on a rushing assailant, saying that they would catch him with this technique and that technique as he moved forward - just like they do in the photo shoot self defence strips in the martial arts mags! Not in the real world matey, unless you're very lucky. In several hundred fights that kind of reaction has worked for me only once or twice. Fitting these 'stop hits' into a

photo shoot is one thing, to do it with a real opponent who explodes at you like a bullet from a gun - not quite so easy.

I remember, even as a very young karataka, watching a fight in the local pub and thinking 'how the **ck do you fit martial art into that?' I innately knew that what I had would not work under real conditions unless I mad some radical changes in strategy and technique. Later, after acquiring some 'real' flight time I realised that the only way to fit it in was to do so just before the fight became physical-response/the sniper option - or, if the situation went beyond that to adapt what I had so that I could meet that 'in your face' grappling range with the ferocity and skill to out do my assailant.

I found that perception and awareness allowed me to utilise the sniper option in the vast majority of cases - and I trained to this end. I also realised that no matter how well thought out the game plan 'shit happens' so the ambush and match fight had to be addressed also.

In a way the ambush was easier than the sniper option because, as I have said, it is a subconscious reaction that is not contemplated/ thought over/dwelled upon or analysed. You just go with the flow. The sniper option, however, takes conscious thought and extreme control. You have to be proactive rather than reactive, you have to step forward and be first even though everything inside you seems to be pulling you back. We seem, in this day and age, to be indoctrinated with the 'no first attack philosophy'. We are taught from youth not to attack first, so, to completely reverse this ethos means reversing the way we think and subsequently the way we train. Everything we do in the martial arts seems to start with defence and is then followed by a counter attack: 'when the opponent strikes with this move we block and counter attack'. Or even better still make the blocking technique so hard that it injures and thus discourages our attackers. And so to this end we practice defence and counter against a multitude of different attacks, most

of which are attacks of our own design that no one is ever likely to use, all executed from a safe range, (in some styles/schools a ridiculously safe range) then we wonder what went wrong when reality kicks our arse.

After making a few early mistakes and ending up grappling on the floor with some lowlife trying to make me a hat out of a beer glass - and the onlookers turning their noses up and saying 'I thought he was a supposed to be a Karate man' as though karate has failed if you go to ground - I wondered just why that distance was lost so quickly and one ended up fighting on the floor even before you realised that a fight was on the cards? I did a little study on this and I watched maybe in excess of a few thousand fights and this is my conclusion:

If you look at someone like Linford Christie, he can cover 100 metres in under 10 seconds, that's about 30 feet a second. Now if he can cover 30 feet a second how fast could he cover two feet? Three, four even five feet? Probably in the blink of an eye. So when you face a guy in the street, loaded with the human turbo drive adrenalin, how long is it going to take him to cover the distance at which one argues? Not very long. So quickly, in fact, that after the fight you can't even remember how the distance was lost.

Line ambush

A great way to demonstrate this is to practice line ambush. Not only is this a good way to develop fast reaction it is also an excellent way to enlighten those who are still not convinced.

Stand one student in front of a line of other students. The guy at the front should stand in a natural stance, the way you might stand in a pub or at the bus stop, facing the line. He should wear bag gloves (as opposed to boxing gloves).

The first student in the line facing him should move forward until he can touch him with an outstretched arm (about 19"-24")

then, whenever he is ready he should rush forward and try to rugger tackle the guy at the front to the ground. From the natural stance, arms by side, the guy at the front should try to stop him from grabbing with any technique he wishes to use - with no restriction on control - if he can he should try and knock his opponent out, this will encourage realism on both sides. Once the fighters reach a clinch situation on the ground they should break and the next guy in the line attack. Change around and place different people at the front of the line.

When everyone has had a go extend the distance between attacker and defender until, eventually, there is a gap of about ten feet.

This will show you just how hard it is to hit a man who is rushing forward and also just how difficult it can be avoiding grappling range.

Grab reaction

Another valid training method for the ambush is grab training, that is you allow your opponent to grab you from different positions and angles and then defend accordingly. This is not a big part of my own training because I tend to use the 'fence around the factory' defence, which makes it very difficult for an opponent to grab. However, as I said earlier, we all make mistakes, even monkeys fall out of trees, so every scenario has to be addressed.

I haven't got a great deal of belief in locks and levers when someone has grabbed you. More often than not if someone does not want to let go of you they won't, unless you can cause a reaction that will force them to let go, like a poke in the eye or a punch on the nose. In theory the pain of a lock should force an opponent out of a grab; in reality it usually does not. When someone grabs you within a conflict they are usually charged with panic. I remember head butting a guy who had hold of my shirt, three times, as hard as I could. I hit him so hard that I laid him out and later he had to be

taken to hospital with concussion but it still did not release his panic grip. He had gripped my shirt so hard that when he fell he ripped it clean off my back (after the hospital treated him for concussion and a severed finger tip he had to have an operation to remove my shirt from his fingers).

I also read about a Ju-Jitsu guy who tried to hold an assailant in the street with a very painful arm lock that had had everyone 'tapping out' in the dojo, the guy head butted the Ju-Jitsu man so hard that he KO'd him, then ran off cradling a broken arm. This is not to say that they cannot work, just try not to be too shocked when an uncompliant assailant does not fall over and play dead.

In grab reaction training it is important to instil, in the grabber & grabbed, a sense of realism. People in real situations rarely grab for the sake of grabbing, they grab to add leverage to a strike or they grab to pull a victim to the floor. So to make the exercise more realistic the grabber should grab and then try to wrestle the opponent to the floor or hit him or whatever, there should be no compliance (except for when one first learns technique). Again this kind of exercise should make the whole scenario an enlightening experience and unrealistic techniques will rise to the top of the broth leaving you with only those that will work.

Chapter Six
The fence

Priming - putting a fence around your factory

When the police talk about self protection the key word is 'target hardening', that is, making yourself a hard target by means of placement and awareness of environment and the enemy. When I talk about the physical aspect of self protection I am always working on the premise that, for whatever reason, a situation has gone beyond this and reached dire straits and the possibility of escape is no longer an option or the option has been lost.

As I said earlier in the book, the winner and loser in most situations is usually determined by what happens pre-fight as opposed to in-fight. Most situations start at conversation range, this being talking or hand shake distance. If this is mismanaged it degenerates rather quickly to vertical grappling range and then ground fighting - not a good place to be if you don't know ground fighting or are faced by more than one opponent. Whilst conversation distance is not a chosen range - most people feel safer at about four or five feet - it can be maintained so that it does not degenerate further into grappling by 'putting a fence around your factory'.

If you had a factory that you wanted to protect from robbers the most sensible thing to do would be to place a fence around it to make it a hard target so that a potential robber has got to get past that fence before he can even think about attacking the factory. Whilst the fence might not keep him out indefinitely it will make his job decidedly harder. Rather like a boxer who constantly flicks a jab into his opponent's face, even if that jab does not hurt his opponent it still keeps him at bay, and if his opponent wants to employ his

Knock Out blow he first has to find a way past his opponent's jab. To the boxer the jab is the fence around his factory.

In self protection the fence around your factory is your lead hand, placed in that all important space between you and your antagonist to maintain a safe gap.

Like the factory fence the lead hand will not keep an aggressor at bay forever - just long enough for you to initiate an escape or a pre-emptive attack - but it will place you in charge, even though your aggressor may not know it. Placed correctly the lead hand will not only maintain a safe gap but it will also disable the attacker's armoury - right and left hand techniques/ head butt etc - (though he may not know it on a conscious level he will instinctively realise that, until that fence has been removed or by-passed, his techniques have no clear way through).

Sensory tentacle

The lead hand should be held in a non aggressive way (see illus.) and should not touch the aggressor unless he makes a forward movement and tries to bridge the gap between you and he. It acts as a sensory guide to your aggressor's intentions: if he moves forward he will touch the fence and set your alarm bells ringing. This forward movement should be checked so as to maintain the safe range by using the palm of the lead hand on the aggressor's chest. Don't hold the touch as this may be seen by your assailant on a conscious level as a controlling movement (whilst of course it is a controlling action it's better at this stage that the aggressor does not feel that you are in control). This will force him to knock your hand away or grab your wrist and possibly cause him to attack you prematurely, so as soon as you have checked him return the lead hand to its stand-by position.

One of the final subliminal pre-pre-cursors to an aggressor's attack is distance close down. If he tries to bridge the gap that you

are maintaining it is usually because he is making his final preparations for assault, so if he does move forward and touch the fence you should, as well as checking range, be getting ready to attack pre-emptively or suffer the consequences should he break down the fence. In my opinion the maximum amount of times that a potential attacker should be allowed to touch the 'fence' is twice - after that you've got big problems and will probably end up in a match fight situation or on the floor with a crowd around you, depending up on the calibre of fighter you are facing. Every time the attacker touches the fence the danger doubles.

The 'fence' should look and feel natural. This will come with practice: if it does not and the attacker notices it on a conscious level he will try to knock it away and bridge the gap. Ideally the 'fence' should look like you are using your hands to talk ('talking hands' as my friend Mourice Teague calls it).

A professional may notice the 'fence' no matter how well you disguise it and try using deceptive dialogue or body language to bring the 'fence' down, once down he will act. This often entails telling you that he does not want trouble, or that he 'just wants to talk', he may ask directions, the time, your name anything to disarm you enough to lower the fence. An experienced fighter will offer to shake hands to get rid of the fence or try to close the gap by putting his arm around you in a pally kind of way - don't have any of it. If there is the slightest chance of threat then don't let anyone touch you. A good fighter will only need one shot once the fence is down so keep it up. If he still persists in coming forward and you do not feel ready to strike, or indeed are not even sure that a strike is called for, don't hesitate to back-up the 'check' with a firm verbal fence; 'Just stay where you are'.

With the modern enemy the rule of thumb is 'if his lips are moving he's lying' so don't believe a word that he says. If he still persists in coming forward then he has given you the 'go'. Having said all that,

if the potential attacker has already made his intentions obvious by asking you for your wallet or threatening you then there is nothing to contemplate, you should 'go' the first time the touches the 'fence'.

Range finder

The fence also acts as a range finder - many trained fighters misjudge the distance of their attacks in a real situation because the range is foreign to them by touching the opponent with the lead hand before initiating your attack you can judge the exact distance, this enabling you a more accurate and solid shot.

Action trigger

If and when you have decided to initiate an attack the lead hand also acts as a physical action trigger, you touch the opponent with the lead hand - find the range - and bounce off the touch using it to trigger your attack. This should be coupled by the verbal action trigger detailed earlier.

Multiple attackers

The 'fence' can also be used to maintain the range and even position of multiple attackers. But this is tantamount to fighting on more than one front, and it is very difficult to maintain the range of more than one attacker so a speedy decision to attack or escape should always be sought.

The fence can be constructed in any way you choose as long as it blocks the gap and looks inoffensive. You can use a 'stop fence' by placing the palm of the lead hand to/in front of the opponent, but this will bring the control to a conscious level and may catalyse alarm in the opponent - where possible it is best to control him without him knowing it.

Here are a couple of suggested fences

The pleading fence (PF)

This is a nice fence because it is submissive and inoffensive but it blocks range perfectly. It also leaves the fingers ideally placed for an eye attack should it be needed. It is often best to underline the fence with firm dissuasive dialogue, 'look, just keep away from me, I don't want trouble,' or a more assertive 'stay where you are - don't come any closer'.

Submissiveness is ideal if you have decided that you are going to employ a pre-emptive attack or you are using the deception to escape, it will mentally disarm your opponent making him an easy target. It has, however, a bad point: many attackers will see submissiveness as a meal ticket to an easy victim and spur on their assault, which is OK if you are setting the trap but not so good if you are not expecting it. Personally I use the submissive approach quite a lot because it really does disarm the opponent and give you a clear line for the sniper option, whereas other times I will use an assertive, even aggression fence, to psyche out the opponent.

Assertiveness can be a good thing and a bad thing. If the attacker thinks that you are confident it may cause him to abort his intended attack. After all, 'when ignorance is mutual confidence is king', but if he is committed to attacking you

no matter what, your assertiveness may trigger his aggression and you may lose the element of surprise.

Having spent a lot of time working with and controlling violent people I have learned to judge the right time for assertiveness and the right time for submissiveness. Not everyone will be able to do this so - if you have to choose and there is no other way, use submissiveness to disarm and then attack and run, or use firm (but not aggressive) or submissive - verbal dissuasion.

Both hands are placed in front of you, palms facing the attacker and several inches away from him but not touching.

The staggered fence (SF)

Similar to the PF with palms facing forward but with the hands staggered by about twelve inches. The hand at the back would be the ideal one used to attack though with practice the lead hand would be ideally placed for a finger strike to the eyes.

The exclamation fence (EF)

The hands, palms upward, are held as though in exclamation, the lead left hand pushed forward as fence and the right hand, cocked to strike, to your own right hand side (left if reversed).

The verbal fence

The verbal fence is an excellent tool if you can see menace on its way in and works well pre-fight, in-fight and post fight. I have used it successfully many times. This extract from my book *Watch My Back* exemplifies a post-fight fence rather well.

The fight with 'the karate kid' had been on the cards for several months. I'd tried to avoid it but was unable. I pick up the situation as it reached its conclusion - the post-fight fence comes in at the end of the fight when one of his friends becomes involved; (this was a match fight by the way).

"I'd spent two months trying to avoid this situation and was fed up with trying, I had no more chances left in my 'chance bag'.

As the karate kid got closer his face began to grimace and I sensed he was going to strike at any moment.

'BANG!' Almost in slow motion, I hooked my right fist onto his advancing jaw, pushing it backwards, shaking his grey matter into

the realms of unconsciousness. As he fell I volleyed his face and he spiralled, like movie strobe. I kicked him so hard that it hurt my foot. I felt hate leaving my body; he landed face down and forlorn on the cruel, black tarmac of defeat. Many people were watching, so I thought I'd give them a display, not for exhibitionism, nor fun, nor ego, I just wanted to take out a little insurance. Making the onlookers (mostly his mates) think that I was an animal would, in the future, ensure that they did not tangle with me. It's what the Chinese call 'killing a chicken to train a monkey'.

'Kiaaa,' I screamed as I brought an axe kick onto the body of my sleeping quarry. To the onlooker, it probably looked barbaric, (which is how I wanted it to look), but in reality the kick was empty, I pulled it on impact, just as I had a thousand times in training.

The man with the weasel face (the karate kid's mate) ran at me, from the crowd of onlookers, with ill intent and I stopped him in his tracks with a lash of my tongue (the verbal fence).

'GER OUT 'F MY ****ING FACE BEFORE I DESTROY YA!'

I pointed at him to underline my resolve. He stopped like an insect on fly paper."

The Psychological fence

The psychological fence is a fighter's reputation or confident/ aggressive gait - this places an invisible fence around you that only the very brave will try to pass.

The negative psychological fence

Deliberately dropping the physical or psychological fence by pretending to be scared or unthreatening can draw the opponent forward onto your intended attack - he walks into a trap.

Unlike the varying genres of physical fence the verbal fence is best aggressive - the more so the better. It has to pierce the opponent's subconscious and register danger with the brain - thus

causing an adrenal reaction in him that, hopefully, he will mistake for fear.

In America they have a saying in the prisons 'Give me five feet', meaning keep at least five feet away from me, five feet being the distance at which they feel they are relatively safe. This only works if you're perceptive/aware enough to spot menace at a very early stage. More often than not a fight will come through an argument or some kind of aggressive verbal so the five feet rule is already lost and the physical fence comes into play.

If you are using the verbal fence you must, as I have said, be very firm/even aggressive,

'Stay where you are, don't come any closer, stay!'

This would be underlined by placing your lead hand in front of you in a stop sign.

This can even work in-fight if someone tries to attack you whilst you are fighting/defending yourself. I have been grappling on the floor with one opponent when his mate has tried to join in against me. Noticing this I used an in-fight fence by telling the guy that if he joined in I was going to batter him afterwards - he quickly changed his mind.

On the one hand the physical fence will control range and prime your attack. On the other hand, if you are not sure whether to strike or not, the fence allows you time to maintain a relatively safe range whilst you plan a course of action, bearing in mind that decision making this late in the game is not a good thing, though sometimes it is unavoidable.

As I've previously mentioned, Sir Winston Churchill once said that occasionally people stumble upon the truth - and then get back up and wander off as though nothing happened. The truth is, in the three second fight, the 'fence' is one of the best, if not the best, little techniques available for controlling the early stages of an altercation, but it is so simple that many people often fail to see its

importance. It is too easy and they are looking for something more advanced or fantastic. To be honest the advanced stuff, the fantastic stuff, only works in the James Bond films. The fence should therefore become the bedrock of all your physical self protection work - ignore it at your own peril.

Chapter Seven
The Attack

The attack is your chosen main artillery technique and whilst many techniques should be practised and perfected, one or two, the ones that work best for you, should be taken to one side and isolated - these will be the techniques used in your sniper option.

There is no sense in beating about the bush and saying that main artillery can be taken from any range because they can't. If punching range is the one most often given in a real situation then that is where the main artillery should be drawn from. Having said that I always think it is wise to have one or two very strong techniques at every range, after all a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

So, hand techniques are the order of the day, and there is little point in manufacturing another range when the one you are in is the most clinical anyway. Kicking and grappling range are far from clinical. They are, at best, elongated ranges where it usually takes several blows or seconds to finish an adversary as opposed to the split second it can take to finish a fight with a good hand technique. Punching range is also a very mobile range and a good puncher can move through several opponents in as many seconds. This would be very difficult with kicking range - kicks are better employed as a finishing technique to a prostrate opponent - and almost impossible with grappling range, which is better suited to the match fighter.

I will list a few techniques that I have, and do, use but, basically, any short range hand technique, as long as it is a finishing technique, will suffice. I would keep clear of time wasting and superfluous technique. Once you get this far you may have one chance and one chance only - don't waste it. Once the opportunity has gone it may never present itself again. Your attack should be a destroying technique that hits your opponent like a steam train, not a silly-

flicky back fist that might make his eyes water. If you want to do that you'd be better employed reading him an extract from Love Story.

Trapping/jamming and the likes are also unlikely to have any relevance here. Unless you allow someone to touch or grab you then a trap can be followed by a devastating head butt or hand strike. Once a fight becomes live nothing stays still for long and the concept of flowing through a series of trapping movements is not a sound one. If you beg to differ then I respect your opinion but please don't try to convince me. Have an animal day at your own club and see for yourself. When you watch someone like the brilliant Rick Young teach trapping it makes you realise what a valid part of your armoury it can be. But even Rick will probably tell you it is an incidental range used to back up main artillery. Basic trapping therefore is a valid - though very small - part of the support system. A fight goes from talking distance to 'in your face' in the blink of a eye.

People often ask me what is the best means of physical defence and I always reply 'learn to hit ****ing hard', and that's the bottom line. Learn how to hit very very hard and you'll come out of most situations on top, but please learn to do it from the right range. It's one thing being able to hit hard from a comfortable range and from a guard position or perhaps even using combination to build momentum and power but how well will you fare when the distance you are used to is halved and you have to punch from a no-guard position? It's a completely different ball game so it is important to train your techniques as close to reality as possible so that when you make the step from dojo to street that step is not such a big one. If you are used to compliance in training you've got a very big shock coming to you when the shit hits the fan.

In the vast majority of situations I have been involved in I have used a left lead 'fence' to set up a right handed punch - sometimes

a cross, sometimes a hook. My base was, and is, usually always a very small left lead forty-five degree stance and I always ask a question before I strike. Others I have worked with preferred a left lead stance and a right hand fence punching with a left hook off the lead leg, others still favoured a left lead fence from a left lead stance and attacked with a pummelling head butt.

For those that prefer it, the lead hand or reverse hand finger strike is also a good 'stopping technique'.

The following illustrations are some of the favoured.

The exclamation fence . . . right cross

The reverse hand fence . . . left hook

Passive fence . . . head butt

As a final point on attack, don't ever pull your technique. If a situation has become so bad that you are forced to hit someone to protect yourself then they deserve everything they get. Pulling your technique is the quickest way to the graveyard, so either attack all out or do not attack at all. The only exception to this rule is if you are very experienced and feel you can judge the potency of your attacker. I was often faced with people that were not enough of a threat to demand a good hiding so I would use an adrenalin switch (see *Dead or Alive*) to psyche them out and thus beat them without coming to arms. This, though, takes a lot of experience and unless you are very experienced don't take the chance.

It is also my recommendation that, once you have hit your opponent, you make good your escape. The only time you need to finish off an opponent is when he is still a threat. If he is not then there is no need (I know this contradicts some of the things I have said in Watch My Back but that [bouncing] again is a different arena where many rules have to be broken to keep the peace - long term). I have seen many people go for a finish when a finish was not necessary - and lose as a consequence. Use the distraction of your attack to make good an escape - that's my advice if the situation is a self defence one. If it is a fight situation you may need to stay and finish off.

Chapter Eight

Aftermath, Law – the second enemy

By Peter Consterdine 8th Dan EKGB

I thought it apt to include this chapter, taken from a newsletter by Peter to British Combat Association members in January 96 (The British Combat Ass. is a self defence association that Peter and I run together) in light of the recent bad publicity that reality training has received from the police and the media. We all have to be held responsible for our actions with regard to self defence but more than that we have to look out for the second enemy in today's society - the law. Many people are convicted in self defence situations not for what they have done but for what they have said in their police statements - post fight.

To attain realism one has to train for realism. When we do we are slated by our peers, the uninitiated, for being bruisers, philistines, animals etc because we do not exclude socially unacceptable technique from our syllabus and because we are not afraid to promote what is needed to successfully survive a violent encounter. We are made to feel like the scum of the earth because of our empirically based beliefs. I will leave Peter to better describe the hypocrisy that abounds - GT.

I'll start this article with apologies to the many serving police officers out there who are conscientiously trying to uphold the law - the following is not directed at them, rather at senior police and home office management.

Just recently one of the clubs registered to the BCA has come under the spotlight in his area for running an abridged version of Geoff's 'animal day'. He's actually only been doing it at night, but calling it 'animal night' doesn't quite have the same ring. Unfortunately he's drawn attention from both the local police and news media, who are both endeavouring to close him down and develop a prosecution for organising any injuries which students might inflict on each other. As we know, with the exception of a few bloody noses, no serious injuries ever occur during realistic training events, but the impression they give is always worse than the actuality.

I am always ambivalent over police matters, particularly when it comes to self defence. My sympathies are very much with them regarding their own problems on the street and during any year I instruct many police officers in 'practical protection issues'. What I can't come to terms with is the hypocrisy which attends senior police attitudes with regards to the general public's equal wish to be as capable as any police officer wishes to be in his or her own defence.

Over the past few years we have seen police officers, quite rightly, 'harden' themselves to increasing acts of violence. Stab vests, quick cuffs, side handled batons, expanding metal coshes, long batons and now CS gas, have all been trialed and adopted so as to give a police officer an even chance with the villains that roam the streets. Decades of ad-hoc and ineffective police self defence training is now being overturned in favour of a co-ordinated instruction strategy

which combines the use of all this modern equipment in a common way and also to include unarmed control and restraint techniques.

A recent article in Police Review entitled 'fighting talk' extolled the virtue of the Strathclyde Constabulary's 5 day self defence training programme. An inspector, Alex Hossack is quoted as saying 'society is changing and we have to adapt to meet these changes'. This statement was supported, statistically by the fact that the force had more than 50% of operational officers assaulted in 1993 and a PC tragically stabbed to death in Glasgow in 1994.

The course is unique in that it runs over 5 days and the operational 'down time' to the force in lost manpower is tremendous, but reflects the growing necessity for self defence training. It reflects the very seriousness of the situation out there on the streets.

The point is those are the same streets that we're on, not just our police, so it's all right for them to 'gear up' to a worsening situation, but when we train for reality as situations demand out there, we walk closer to that indistinct line on the floor than if we step over we break the law, seemingly even in our training.

This is compounded by the fact that the police as an authority, will always go to great lengths to disguise and confuse as to what the law says about self defence.

When talking about training for reality, even this is a problem for the police with regard to old, out of date attitudes. An article in Feb. 95 headed 'Checks on Self Defence Classes' dealt with the injuries to officers in self defence classes and whether instructors were adequately trained due to the high level of injuries. It highlighted a report about one training establishment which came under

criticism for a high level of injuries and the report called for the head of the centre to report. He simply stated that the level of injuries affected the seriousness which his staff attached to safety and also that they were meticulous, in any case, in recording all the injuries. What eventually came out was that they would always have a problem in balancing safe dojo practices with training for reality. It's the old problem of breaking eggs and making omelettes etc.

That's all 'animal day' or any other realistic training programme hopes to achieve. Forget the title – it's just sensational to draw attention to its cause. It's simply training for reality which necessarily includes the use of every weapon in one's armoury, be it biting, head butts, chokes, strangles etc, but all in a controlled way.

Don't ever start to think that such things as biting are illegal or not allowed at law in the perceived 'Queensbury' rules of the street. I quote from the Metropolitan Police bodyguard course for their officers:

Item 7 - Maximum Force Potential

'Concentration of the greatest proportion of your strength against the most vulnerable area of your opponent's body will achieve the best results'.

Controlled reaction

'The degree of attack will dictate the amount of force required to stop it. There is no need, under these circumstances, to protect the VIP's image or consider public opinion. You do not have the time, further - no serious complaint is likely to be entertained where an armed assailant is seriously injured by police warding off a vicious attack on them or their VIP.'

The manual goes on to talk about vulnerable points and states, 'the body has many anatomically weak areas, but only a few can be termed truly vulnerable in the context of unarmed combat.

Primary Points

The eyes, the throat, the testicles.
The manual goes on to talk about combining these areas of attack and that two at one time are better than one. As we know, strikes to the throat can kill quite easily. Of singular importance in all this however is the list of 'Potential Body Weapons'.

The following are useful in attack/defence.

HEAD - to attack the face, nose etc.

ELBOW- to attack kidneys, stomach etc.

TEETH- to attack nose, cheek, or neck (jugular vein).

Note: in view of the diseases which are known to be blood transferred, the teeth should only be used as an absolute last ditch method of obtaining release.

Never use your fist on a hard body surface.

Always when striking attempt to strike through the target: look beyond and attempt to hit it. You will then disperse all the force into the target area.

All the above quotes are exactly as presented in the manual and it's interesting to note that the only caveat on biting is

in relation to the problems of transferring diseases, not the injuries that may be suffered.

All the above, if occasion demands, is allowed and legitimate and if biting, gouging and head butts etc are all that's left to you to possibly save your life or prevent serious injury to you or others, then the law relating to us is no different than the law of self defence for police officers.

Whilst the police are, at last, making it would seem, some serious in-roads into good effective and tactical kit and reality of training, the average man and woman on the street cannot be forgotten.

If you ask a police officer whose responsibility is the safety of individuals they will answer 'the person themselves'. The police are not there to look after your safety - you are.

In any police manual issued to the prominent and wealthy on 'personal security', you will read the same principle stated on every occasion which is that 'the individual is responsible for his or her own security'.

So if that's the case - let us get on with it. We will stay within the law, but we'll work up to the very limit of it in both training and in actuality.

Eventually, the ultimate test of one's legal correctness of action is not in someone else's view, nor in the hands of the police, but rests with the Crown Prosecution Service, who are responsible for eventually prosecuting. Their track record to date is less than admirable, prosecuting only 50% of police cases submitted to them and 'plea bargaining' down to trivia for crimes committed by violent and experienced criminals. Even then, facing a prosecution, you still have your defence through the courts. At the time of assault I'm not going to think about the consequences and I'll definitely take my chance with the system.

Another quote that I think is relevant to indicate changing social statement that 'Everyone has been relying on the traditional image of the British bobby and the weight the uniform carried, but it doesn't provide the degree of help it did in the past - we were concerned to get something that really works for officers' - Alex Hossack.

Well let me tell you, we're concerned to get something that really works for the average person who faces violence and assault and muggings and who hasn't even got a uniform to impress, whether out of date or not.

TIMES HAVE CHANGED - control has effectively been lost on the street and the 'animals' are out of the zoo. It's not just media hype - it's fact. It is also a fact that more Met. police officers have been killed since 1990 than in the NYPD. There is some hope as the home secretary had announced a review of policy on victims of crime who use the right to self defence.

'It is in the interests of no one, not the police, nor the CPS and certainly not the public, for criminal proceedings to be started against those who have dome no more than was reasonable to defend themselves, their family and their property.'

Michael Howard

WE'LL SEE!

Peter Consterdine

SELF DEFENCE AND THE LAW

Before I delve into the histrionics of the law and how you the victim stand within it, I must say this. As important as the law may be, you would be foolish to contemplate such a thought when an assault on your person is imminent. To think of such things will cause indecision which begets defeat. One second of indecision can mean the difference between defending yourself successfully and getting battered/raped/robbed.

'Better to be judged by twelve, than carried by six.'

The law is often even negligent with its own officers.

Coventry Evening Telegraph. January 13, 1995.

"Police watchdogs are demanding a hardline court crackdown on drunken street yobs behind the rising tide of attacks on beat bobbies.

They want an end to so-called plea bargaining between lawyers, which leads to thugs facing 'watered down' charges.

The plea for action from Warwickshire police authority is a direct reaction to the 50% surge in the number of attacks on officers last year.

A total of 377 days were lost through sickness as 169 male, 26 female and 16 special police officers were reported as too badly hurt to work.

Chief Constable Peter Joslin admitted officers were left frustrated and annoyed when cases of assault against them were dropped in exchange for guilty pleas to other more or less serious charges.

He said, 'Most of the attacks are alcohol related. Only last weekend an officer was assaulted twice in one night, once with a billiard ball in a sock.

'We are seen more and more as fair game, but it is as much a problem with society as anything else.'"

Talk to any policeman or read any text on law and from out of the maelstrom of labyrinthine paragraphs and sub-paragraphs one word, 'reasonable' will stand out. An assault upon a person who is attacking, or even about to attack you, must show 'reasonable' force if it is to be deemed lawful. The dictioned word states: 'In accordance with reason. Not extreme or excessive'.

Section 3, Criminal Law Act 1967 states: 'A person may use such force as is 'reasonable' in the circumstances, in the prevention of crime'.

March 1993, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

"A man who bit a chunk of another man's nose walked free from the crown court after a jury decided he had acted in self defence."

Even a serious wounding upon an adversary maybe excusable if it is occasioned reasonably in the circumstances, and all the more justifiable in court, (though not essential), if the person claiming self defence demonstrates that at the time of the assault/attempted assault, he did not want to fight. Even the pre-emptive strike is tolerated in law, if the person claiming self defence can again show that he was in imminent danger of assault.

"Attorney General's Reference No. 2 of 1983. An individual can protect himself in advance from attack, for example by arming himself or making a bomb, and this can constitute self defence."

Honest belief

If you can say that you honestly believed that an attack upon your person was imminent then a pre-emptive attack can be employed and self defence claimed - but the threat has to be obvious. If, for instance, your assailant is stood at the other side of the road and

you walked across and hit him, that would not be seen as self defence and your pre-emptive attack would be outside of the law.

This may be demonstrated in law by the person claiming self defence telling the police or courts, (if applicable), for example, that the antagonist shouted profanities at him and then moved aggressively toward him, forcing him to attack first. Again it helps if you can demonstrate that at the time you did not want to fight. Of course, the pre-emptive strike must be justified. If, for instance, your antagonist/potential antagonist has his hands in his pockets at the time of your pre-emptive strike, your actions might well be seen as unlawful. If you knock the person to the ground using reasonable force, to all intents and purposes, a further strike to the said person would be classed as unreasonable force, and therefore, unlawful (unless he was trying to get back up to attack you). This also ties in nicely with my recommendation to 'hit and run'.

In brief and to sum up, the law states, in the case of self defence of property or of another, (Butterworth - Police Law), self defence and the defence of property or of another are common law defences. However, a person who acts in defence of himself, or another, or of property, is invariably acting in the prevention of crime in which case he also has the defence under the Criminal Law Act 1967, Section 3. For practical purposes, the terms of both the common law and the statutory defences are identical in their requirements.

The issue of self defence as an excuse for a non-fatal offence against the person has been summarised extremely well by the court of appeal. The court said that it was both good law and good sense that a person who is attacked may defend himself, but that in doing so, he may only do what is reasonably necessary.

The test of whether or not the force is reasonable is an objective one, but it is assessed on the facts as the person concerned believed

them to be. It is also important, but not essential, that a person claiming self defence demonstrated that he did not want to fight.

Again, I must re-emphasise that too much regard to 'how you stand within the law' could prove detrimental.

The time to think about such things is either before (not actually prior to attack, rather in the controlled arena when looking at worse case scenario), as a part of your game plan, or afterwards when (if), the police become involved.

Basically, if you pre-emptively attack an attacker and then make good your escape, which is what I recommend, you should be safe in the eyes of the law as long as you claim self defence and quote the law. As I have already said, people are often convicted for what they say as opposed to what they do, so if self defence is your aim, even your business, then make it your duty to understand completely how you stand within the law.

As a final note: the law differs from country to country, though most recognise the right to 'self defence'. The foregoing chapter should be used as a rule of thumb and not as actual fact.

For more details contact your local police station.

Conclusion

There is not a lot more to say that I have not already said. What is most important and stands repeating is that three second fighting, match fighting and ambush fighting are all different and demand different methods of training and defence. I can categorically state that, unless you are completely unaware in which case every situation will be a virtual ambush fight, most situations will fall into the three second fighter category. The most important three seconds are not those in-fight but those pre-fight. These are the ones that usually determine the winner and the loser, so learn the rituals of attack, train for pre-emptiveness and above all train for realism.

Thanks.